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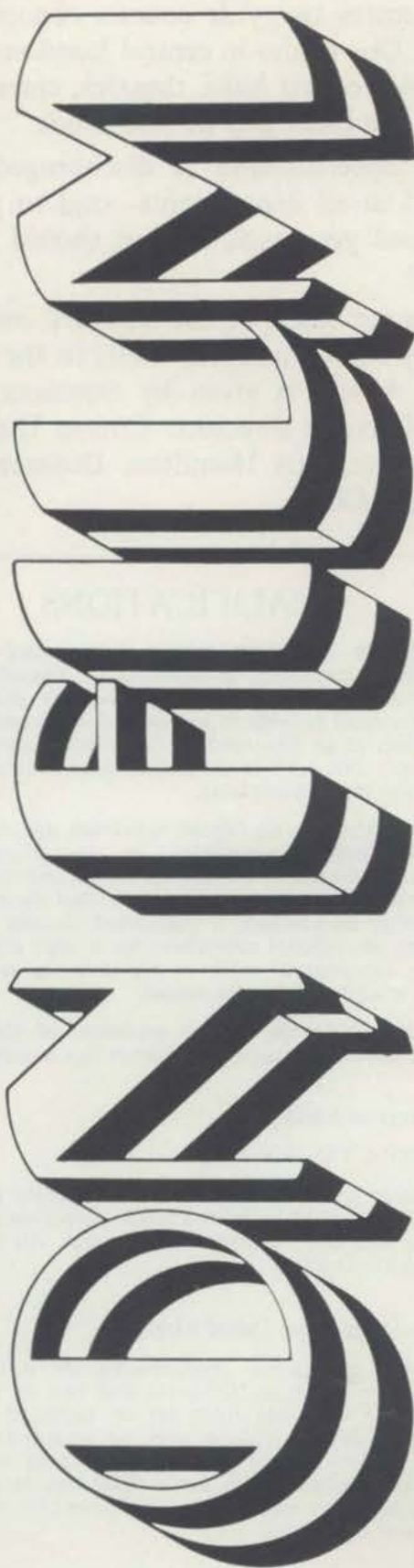
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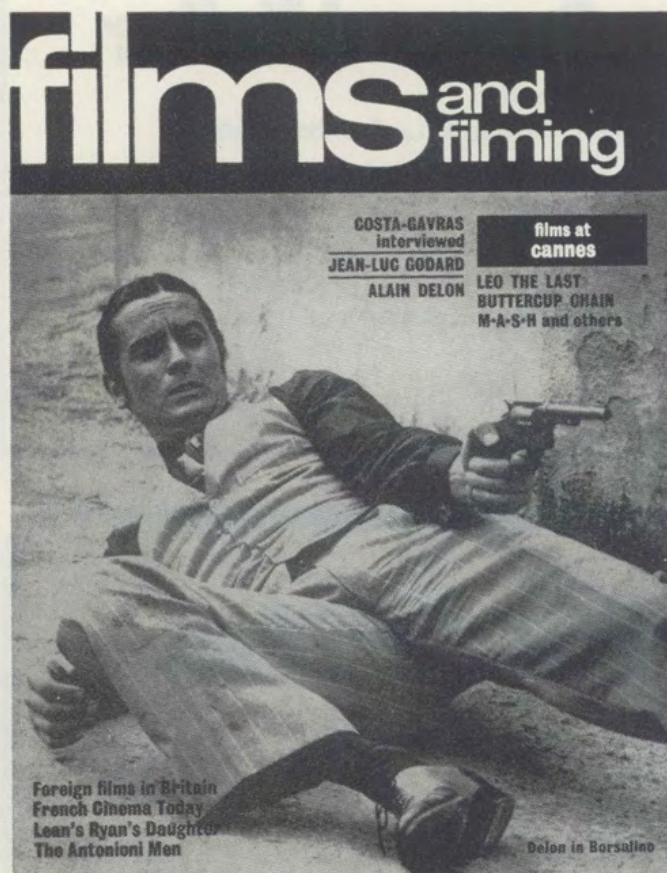
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SIGHT^{AND}SOUND

THE INTERNATIONAL FILM QUARTERLY

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ABOVE: PETER COOK, DENHOLM ELLIOTT IN "THE RISE AND RISE OF MICHAEL RIMMER". RIGHT: "LEO THE LAST".

THE CRISIS WE DESERVE

AUGUST 4 1970: a small procession marches through Soho, headed by a brass band which sounds from a distance like the 76 trombones but proves, on closer inspection, to be more bravely modest. These are film technicians protesting about the Boreham Wood closure, and they don't really look as though they expected their band to penetrate the walls of Wardour Street. There is a long, sad list of defunct studios behind them, all the way back to Ealing and Beaconsfield and Korda's Denham. The British cinema's present state of depression revives many old questions; about our vulnerability as a province of the American production empire, about the creaking and complex structures of the industry. It follows a period of excitement and some waste and intermittent promise. It comes at a time when technological change is bound soon to affect the way we see films.

We asked a number of the younger British film-makers for their views, putting specific questions with the idea that these should be regarded not as a questionnaire but rather as a frame of reference. What do film-makers feel about the context—not only economic—in which pictures are now being made? Although, as expected, the questions produced more indirect comment than specific answers, they are printed here for reference.

Questions TO BILLINGTON / BOORMAN / BROWNLOW / CLARK / CLEMENT / HALL

- 1 *Are you at present making/planning a picture? Have you personally had projects cancelled or postponed recently, or run into budget problems you mightn't have expected a year or so ago?*
- 2 *Is there simply a shortage of cash, or also a real crisis of confidence—failure of nerve with themes that might look hard to sell, and so on?*
- 3 *Do you think British directors (and producers) made the best use of the years of easy American investment? Were too many non-viable pictures made? Has a wave receded without leaving enough that's solid to build on?*
- 4 *Part of Hollywood's answer is to chase the youth market. Do you see that happening here? Do you think, as has been suggested, that people running the British industry are just too old? Or that directors and writers aren't interested? (No British Strawberry Statements or Alice's Restaurants...?) Or that it would be a false move anyway—commercially or otherwise?*
- 5 *Do you think 'Swinging London' etc. had much to do with helping to sell British films abroad, and that now London's no longer such a fashionable place that is a further problem? Or that other factors overwhelmingly outweigh this one?*
- 6 *Now that we have the evidence of the first productions, do you see Bryan Forbes' programme as providing new scope, or new answers?*
- 7 *With audiences, the move now is towards the development of all sorts of extra-commercial outlets (ICA, Other Cinema, etc.). Do you see this as something on its own? Do you foresee, in production, any rapprochement between 'commercial' and 'underground'?*
- 8 *Do you think there is a reluctance among the more significant British film-makers to take on 'commercial' subjects—to do a thriller, for instance? Or that there aren't now any 'commercial' subjects anyhow?*
- 9 *Do you think fundamental problems remain unchanged—difficulties of a circuit release, conservatism of film bookers, etc.? Or do you think there are new and different issues?*



Kevin Billington



I AM ABOUT to make *The Light at the Edge of the World*, with Kirk Douglas and Yul Brynner; and I think this particular picture shows a way in which films can be made without using the old system. This is not an alternative to the big studio system, or an alternative to native British production. It is simply a way that one should perhaps be thinking of as another possible outlet for *oneself*, for making films.

This is in fact a Spanish-French-Italian co-production; the money comes from one country, from a bank, given guarantees through distributors in various countries. It's very difficult to do; it's set up with about 23 co-production deals; there are problems about casting and about language. It puts much more strain on a director, because he is very much a director, a producer, a politician, a tactician—all the things he should be anyway if he's going to make a picture. But it is a way to make films; and that's the important thing. Two years ago, agents and directors could sit at home and the phones rang and the scripts arrived. Now you have to put yourself in a more vulnerable and exposed position—one that in some ways you could possibly be criticised for taking—by entering into situations where you accept limitations from the start. When you make a film there are always limitations—your talent, time, money. This is another one: that you have to persuade a lot of people in different countries, and not just one person or one studio, that your film is worth making.

Although it is much harder, I see this method as being one possible line of hope. I think I speak positively at the moment because I am making a picture. We're all individualistic: if you are working, you're working so hard that you tend to become selfish. The worst thing for me at the moment is the number of people I know with real talent, at every level, who aren't working. And an awful thing about the cinema is the way 'failure' or 'success' depends on whether you are working or not working. It's almost like the nineteenth century puritan view that a man who wasn't in work didn't deserve work . . . But if you *are* about to start working yourself, or are in the middle of a picture, it is very difficult to visualise being out.

I was out, as they say, for almost two years after *Interlude*, and looking back I can't make out whether that was me or the industry. Now I would blame the terrible state of the industry, whereas two years ago I just thought, 'Well, my things aren't working out . . .' Various plans fell through; like everyone else, I worked for months on projects which collapsed. But to me two years not making a film was two years wasted, and the effect of this time was to make me realise that you really have to *work* to make films: you can't just wait for it to happen. If you sit back for the ideal film, then you will never make it, ever. The marvellous work in films has generally been done by people who kept working . . . And this is a craft as well as an art. You have to keep practising it. You'd laugh if someone said he was a carpenter, and you asked him, 'What have you done in the last couple of years?' and he said, 'Well, actually I've spent most of the time reading . . .' How can you call yourself a film director if you don't make films? But you have to go out and find them, and it is harder being in the industry now.

The problem is not just making films; it is also getting them shown. I made a film last year, *The Rise and Rise of Michael Rimmer*, which I think fits exactly what you're asking here—about British films, going into British problems. The British *Z*, really. . . it was a comedy, of course. But the film hasn't been shown yet. It should have been shown early in the year, before the election, because some things we did will now look like being wise after the event whereas in fact they were predic-

tions: about Britain, about what's happening in England, about elections and polls. Whatever one thought about this film, if it was going to make any money the time to put it out was clearly before the election. And what really disconcerts me about the industry is not necessarily that they are bad about art, but that they so often seem bad at the *business* side of things.

Early this year I was due to start a film, but it was turned down by Bryan Forbes. So this regeneration of the British cinema didn't happen for me, at least not in that particular area. I'm glad to say that the film is now being made by someone else—with American money. But this was particularly a British film, it was a small picture, and everyone involved said, 'Yes, we'll take percentages, we'll cut our money down.' Everyone concerned *did* all those things you are told to do . . . and the picture didn't get off the ground.

I don't know the quality of the pictures Bryan Forbes has put out, because I haven't yet seen them. One thing, though, that I couldn't understand about the whole set-up was that it seemed from the beginning as though Bryan Forbes was saddling himself—or being saddled—with a situation that everyone said had been wrong with Hollywood. That was the link between the studio and the film-maker; running a studio while at the same time you are making films, rather than having a studio as space which someone comes and hires. This was one thing that went wrong in Hollywood. It was a big thing to carry along, and having to keep so many hundred or thousand men employed is not necessarily compatible with making interesting pictures.

There is no easy solution to all this. The other day somebody was saying that stars should take less money. I agree: let them take less money. But *that* isn't the real cause of the crisis. Most of the film industry's problems are caused by things happening outside it: the general economic situation in America being the absolutely principal one. There are people in the tin-tacks industry who are out of work, people in the aero-space industry. Look at the number of men Boeing have laid off in the last year. They don't blame the *stars* for that.

The interesting thing about the film industry—it always has been—is that it's like the stock exchange squared. In other words, they work entirely on bulls and bears, extremes of optimism and pessimism. This is what it is to be part of this particular industry, and one has to face it. Every few years times are really good; every few years times are absolutely terrible. And somehow in between never comes, and there never is a normal state. The great crisis of confidence in England, I would say, has probably been the whole Boreham Wood business. In America, however, it happened long before. I was in America in spring 1969, when everything seemed marvellous. By the end of the summer. . . it was all disaster.

But I saw in *Variety* today that the actual takings are 14 per cent up on the same time last year, and the top ten pictures are taking much more money. Of course the top films are doing it all. . . But it is still an industry which needs product: someone has got to make some pictures. The link between the stock market and the film industry is so clear to me that I'm amazed nobody has mentioned it. Because when you are paying 15 per cent for your money, of course you are going to be careful how you spend it. But towards the end of this year, I think money will be pouring into America, because some big films are doing well. And of course everything ties up. Cambodia, Vietnam. . . If Nixon can sort that out, confidence will come back.

I find that a lot of your questions seem to imagine there is something called the British Film Industry. But where is this thing, this creature? I can't find it. More and more, it seems to me a world industry, and really it is a question of the individuals in it. Provided they can find work, it doesn't seem to me terribly important whether it is at Shepperton, or abroad, or wherever. . . I'm doing my bit to help the British film industry, because I'm making a Spanish-French-Italian picture, with no English money at all, and I have an English continuity girl, an English editor, an English costume designer and an English casting director. And I'm using an English boat in the film. . .

But in Britain a couple of years ago, the idea was that if you walked down Wardour Street holding a camera you were

likely to be dragged in and made to make a film. We all know that a lot of very bad films were made, but this was the atmosphere: the whole swinging nonsense, and the idea that if a film was made in England, and the skirts were up to here, then it had to be a success. You can't blame anybody, or put your finger on one particular cause: lots of people got caught up in that mood, playing the old film industry game of follow my leader. And in the same way, if anyone now says, 'I am going to save the British film industry,' you know that he can't do it. Nobody can, no one man, because there are too many links with too many other factors.

The answers I've seen to the problems range all the way from 'Let's have the Polish Film School and state control' to 'Ah, well, it's a pity, it's a terrible industry...' Neither of which is very helpful. But perhaps one problem in the film industry is that we haven't had any Tolpuddle Martyrs yet, in the sense that through the Tolpuddle Martyrs and the growth of trade unionism, an attitude was taken by groups of people. No real attitude, it seems to me, has yet been taken by the people in the industry, to know exactly what it is that they want. When times are good, it's every man for himself; when times are bad, it's a general wringing of hands.

(Edited from a tape recording.)

John Boorman



FOR THE LAST SIX MONTHS I have been making a script (with Rospo Pallenberg) of Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*. I have now submitted script and budget to United Artists, who have financed the venture thus far, and I await their verdict. The film is an epic fantasy and will be expensive to make. Presumably, United Artists will hold the script in one hand and the budget in the other and weigh their chances. Other factors will influence them—their borrowing power, current interest rates, how much they have committed to other films, the state of the world, the weather in New York, etc. Since they have already invested money in this project, they obviously wish to make it. Now they must decide whether or not it is good business.

Even in bad times, one thing is in the film-maker's favour. The distributors have huge staffs spread across the world, chains of cinemas, studios, offices, overheads. This cumbersome beast which renders so many films unprofitable is at the same time a monster that demands to be fed. It is cheaper to make films than not to make them. And under all this tightrope walking and financial acrobatics is the safety net of television sales.

We are all caught in this precarious, inefficient system and subject to its vagaries and hysterical pressures. It lumbers from crisis to crisis, dragging us with it. It lives in a permanent state of collapse. It dictates what we make, and what we fail to make. It is always behind the times, unadventurous, greedy. I don't like the system, but it's all we've got. It gives access to a big, classless, world-wide audience, and this is important. It would be tragic if film became as disassociated from a mass audience as are the other arts.

However, other distribution systems must come into being. The sex-circuit has sprung up all over the world with its own cinemas and distribution system. Only by broadening the basis of exhibition—small automated cinemas, cassettes, the Other Cinema, etc., will it be possible to extend the range and type of film made. And only by pressure from these parallel systems will the existing one reform itself.

I have recently had discussions with a number of directors about new ways of financing and distributing our pictures and

we hope to publish concrete plans soon.

As to the British industry itself, what is there left to say about it? American money flooded in when it was 30 to 40 per cent cheaper to make pictures here. The American unions have made big concessions and the price gap has been considerably closed. This must be very damaging to our prospects.

Kevin Brownlow



THIS CRISIS IS NOT the result of a sudden withdrawal of American finance. It is the end result of a process which has been steadily exacting its toll since the end of the war. When I joined the industry in 1955, technicians were still talking in sepulchral tones of the Great Slump of 1947. Since then, the union has fought hard to ensure that such a crisis never occurred again; they operated a closed shop, they boosted crews to unprecedented proportions, they constantly raised the limits on salaries. Now, they have circulated a panic-stricken notice headed: Will You Be Working Next Year? Thank you for your concern, brothers. I haven't been working this year.

No one learned anything from the Great Slump of 1947, and audience figures have gone downhill ever since. Soon, motion pictures will be relegated to the role of the theatre: culture for the privileged minority.

One sad product of the current crisis has been the canonisation of Bryan Forbes as the Saviour of the Industry—by people who couldn't wait to lash out at the standard of his studio's output. Forbes is as much a prisoner of the system as anyone else in the feature business. Responsible for vast sums of money, he is forced to play safe. The first three films have been disappointing only to those who believed the ABPC publicity, and looked forward to 'a fresh, vigorous approach, with young talent providing the impetus.' The result is the mixture as before: you can't stampede the film industry.

Andrew Mollo and I have long been veterans of the awe-inspiring conservatism of the picture business. Project after project has faded away, starved of enthusiasm, enmeshed in a muddled web of apathy, uncertainty and deceit. They are all received with that phony bonhomie we have grown to expect from producers: 'Why, this is a very, very remarkable script. It'll make a very, very wonderful motion picture. No, I mean that. Sincerely...'

'Part of Hollywood's answer is to chase the youth market,' you say. 'Do you see that happening here?' It has already happened. And it has already failed. Paramount, as an example, were splashing out money, entrusting projects to young directors, just a couple of years ago. But those young directors had to have proved themselves as commercial propositions in some other field—the theatre, television, photography and, in one case, as a pop singer. At this period, only two men managed to become film directors by working their way through the ranks of the film industry: Anthony Harvey and Nicholas Roeg.

Television produced Ken Loach—a few more talents like that, and it will be worth having a slump. Television, in any case, is more likely to produce committed film-makers than the feature industry. And at least you *work* in television. If you stick to your guns and try to get a feature set up, you will have your time wasted by a display of stupidity it would be libellous to expand upon.

Waste is the film industry's primary activity. It wastes money in a fashion that would once have been considered

immoral. Worse still, it wastes time. In the old days, a director could expect to make a feature in three months, from start to finish. In exceptional cases, he could manage six pictures a year. Now it takes several years from the inception of the idea, through the writing of the script, the endless vacuous interviews with producers and distributors and the on-again, off-again period of production. A director of thirty will be fortunate, if present conditions continue, to make ten pictures throughout the entire course of his life. . .

So far, there has only been one way to make professional pictures—the wrong way. The fact that some remarkable pictures have resulted from a ridiculous system is a tribute to the creative technicians, not the producers. No sensible producer would permit the kind of situation where two people are in front of the camera, and a hundred and fifty are behind it. So far, the unions have successfully forced this anomaly, for no one has had the courage to oppose them. Now that the industry has sunk through sheer weight of numbers, will the union permit their members to work in a more rational way? Will they allow them to work on films that don't conform to the agreement? A feature film can be made by a crew of five or six. But you risk being blacklisted if you try it.

The people who run this industry have always been frightened. They have always avoided important themes, stayed well clear of political pictures. But those of us committed to a better film industry are not well served by people who lay the blame on producers and distributors. Conservatism and ineptitude have marked their trail, certainly, but the blame lies fairly and squarely with us—the creative technicians. We have put up with these people, and played their game, according to their rules. We have collaborated to the point of extinction. We have accepted salaries we knew were out of all proportion to our effort. We did nothing to try to create a better atmosphere, or a more rational system. We played along because it was easy and profitable. We had the industry we deserved—now we have the crisis we deserve.

James Clark



YOU ASK ME QUESTIONS which I may not be qualified to answer—so the following observations are really random thoughts caused by the present crisis.

That our industry is experiencing a severe tremor is undeniable. All the old ideas of audience requirements, production costs and merchandising are no longer applicable. Perhaps, in five years time, the movie business will be unrecognisable. Perhaps there will be less production (jobs for fewer people), and perhaps the number of cinemas will decrease (less potential audience), but it all amounts to a *change*—almost a revolution in the whole concept of cinema. This, to me, is the excitement, the anticipation of an upheaval long overdue, and I'm a delighted participant.

The British cinema has been whoring long enough, living off immoral dollar earnings. It has taken an American recession to bring us finally to our senses, and the first three (British financed) films from EMI have merely confirmed the paucity of talent that remains to us. It is clear that the industry, as an organised whole, barely exists. Rank make very few pictures. EMI supply the quota requirements for ABC, and after that there is precious little—an occasional home-grown product from British Lion, and some independently financed pictures looking for the highest bidder and a circuit release, often failing. Add the odd bit of porn and you see the dismal scene. Meanwhile, the elephantine system of distribution and exhibition continues to grind on, their overheads too large, their excesses too gross. That a film should be required to make 2½

times its production cost before showing a profit (some put this figure higher) would seem unnecessary—and those actors and technicians who agree to participation in lieu of salary rarely see a return. The expenses are too easily loaded, and there is little opportunity for producers to check.

The merchandising of films is lamentably old-fashioned; even the advertising misjudges public taste. It's surely time that film people realised that they are in the Leisure Business, which involves participation with the public on all levels. Frankly, I see no reason why we should not go to the public if the public won't come to us. Television is, to a large degree, an outlet—not so much an art—and it is to this outlet that we should be looking. I see no barrier, once the box in the corner has been supplanted by the more sophisticated wall-screens. This will leave the cinemas in the large urban areas to cater to the 'carriage trade'—for the events and spectacles and for reruns of successful films already seen on TV.

There is much talk of cassettes in the trade press, as if they in themselves offer some salvation. Obviously they will have some influence on cinema, but are basically ideal for self-teaching. They will be used also as a circulating library for old feature films, and we may see the death of the 16 mm. library which demands more elaborate and expensive hardware.

The British cinema has rarely been politically involved—and it can't be denied that we are living through a particularly grey period. America is in political and racial turmoil, so their cinema reflects that situation. France, during the Algerian war, produced committed films. Germany, politically placid for years, has remained cinematically impotent. The only recent British film with any socially conscious strength was *Kes*, which was really dealing with problems of provincial secondary education (the boy/bird story being a sub-plot, or the sugar on the pill); and look at the stormy passage that had.

Our cinema won't grow balls until it grows up, and somehow I have the feeling that the pre-pubescent stage is just ending. Even if we're not exactly heading for maturity, at least most people would agree that adolescence is both confusing and exciting—a period of change and discovery. I, for one, am anticipating it with an intensity of delight I haven't felt for years.

Dick Clement



A FEW YEARS AGO the Americans were all of a sudden in love with the idea of British directors. It was one of those bandwagon movements which seem typical of American culture. Inevitably, because it was an irrational love affair, it produced some fairly terrible movies. It provided great opportunities for new directors, however, and one or two have managed to break through.

I am at present preparing a film which will be entirely financed from the continent. Perhaps this is one answer to the receding tide of American finance. Certainly it is a fact that France can still produce people who are 'stars' within their own country, and whose names can provide finance on their own. We can't do this in England because paradoxically we are saddled with the burden of a common language with America. Our 'stars' have to make it on both sides of the Atlantic. If you reply, to hell with stars, that's fine. But in spite of the films that have made it without them, most backers still feel reassured to have them around. And the old, old casting arguments still go on about getting a name for the fifth most important part—you know—'Why don't we get Yul Brynner to play the Staffordshire country doctor?'

Perhaps because of this need to keep an eye on the Americans at all times, we have lost any sense of having our own film culture. I can only think of one film which felt really 'British' in the recent past and that is *Kes*. Not that I care, all that much. I don't believe in a *Daily Express* 'Now at last we've beaten the Americans at their own game' kind of jingoism. I myself feel completely international in my attitude to film-making. But it is a pity that people can't flourish in the sort of thing they do best.

The other film I'm preparing with my partner, Ian la Frenais, is a thriller and it is entirely British in background. We've taken no money for the idea. We're just writing the screenplay whenever we're solvent. As far as I'm concerned it's the most *personal* film I've yet been involved in. But one can't afford to be personal all the time.

A lot of things that are wrong are the same old things. The distribution, of course. And the hopeless trend following of people jumping on yesterday's bandwagons. In the end it amounts to a lack of taste. In a way we haven't even got good bad taste in Britain. If you're going to go out and make *Airport* or *The Adventurers*, fine. Can you see anyone making them, or their equivalent, over here? So we get safe little middle of the road films—each way bets which come fourth and please nobody.

Incidentally, there has been a lot of talk about people taking lower fees and a percentage of the profits. It's splendid and logical. But to go with it, we also need honest book-keeping so that the profits really are worked out fairly. A few people are working towards this. Not yet enough.

In the last year I've had two projects cancelled. It's been a very frustrating year. I feel ultimately confident in the future of the industry—but that is using the word in its broadest sense. A lot of people who have been in the business merely to find the crock of gold at the end of *Easy Rider Meets Gidget* will have to go back to real estate first.

Peter Hall



I AM AT PRESENT engaged in intensive preparation for a film of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* for Dimitri de Grunwald. It is planned to begin shooting early next year. It is obviously a large picture, but we are trying to make the cost sensible and economic by detailed planning at an early stage. At the same time, therefore, that Dennis Cannan and I are working on the screenplay, I am also beginning work with the art director. It is obvious to industry that planning saves money. But the conditions of the film industry do not ordinarily allow it. Proper planning costs money and money is usually unavailable in the preparatory stages of a film. When the film is definitely going to be made—that is, when the money is forthcoming on the basis of the script—everything is improvised hastily and, therefore, expensively. In this case, sufficient money has been made available in the early stages. This is why I am very grateful to de Grunwald, who has not only given me a marvellous subject but the right conditions to plan it. For me, film-making should be controlled improvisation. But without a plan it is financial and artistic chaos.

I have had no film projects cancelled in the last twelve months, but there are two projects which I failed to get finance for. They are worth describing, as I think they illustrate a dilemma in the industry.

The first script was based on Lorna Pegram's book *Summer Fires*. It studied the problems of a man living with two wives, only one of whom could have children. The rules and conventions that the characters had to impose on each other to make an emotionally charged situation bearable were, in

fact, more rigorous than those which are necessary in an ordinary monogamous marriage. The film is about the inescapable ethics of human relationships. The first draft script was liked by many people and nobody said no: the trouble was that nobody said yes either. (A producer I know always keeps his spirits up by saying of any subject, 'I am getting no "noes" on this subject.') I thought that after *Three Into Two Won't Go*, I would have little difficulty in setting up this project. It was not expensive, it was funny, it also exposed the inconsistencies in our modern liberal morality. But given the fact that most companies this summer are dedicated to the safe policy of making no films at all, perhaps it wasn't a difficult film to refuse. Perhaps it is not daring and shocking enough. Perhaps it would be too like a rather outspoken television play. Anyway I could not get it moving, although I'm sure it would have been easy two or three years ago.

My other project was a film set in Suffolk and based on Ronald Blythe's bestseller *Akenfield*. This subject would always have been difficult to find the money for. It is a study of the break-up of an English village. I believe the story is very commercial, because I think that people all over the urban West are wondering where their communities went to and at what point they lost their families and their contact with their environment.

I want to shoot the film with no actors—using a village in Suffolk and real people. It is a very cheap film to make. A feature made like a documentary. It also happens personally to be the thing that I want to do most. The major companies were very nervous ('No actors! Incomprehensible accents! Who cares about an English village even if the book was a bestseller in America?') There was also an underlying feeling that the film was not expensive enough to be 'a real movie'. I therefore tried television companies. They found it too expensive to be a television film. I am not going to give either of these projects up, because I happen to believe that they could be unique.

The crisis of confidence in the industry is because we have lost our audience. Producers do not know what to make. Most pictures fail. My local cinema is empty, even for the greatest London hits. Nobody in my little country town seems very interested in going to the cinema any more. I don't blame them. Television is cheaper and more comfortable.

I think we all have to avoid middle-of-the-road pictures done in a middle-brow way which lack any character or uniqueness. It is still sensible to make an expensive picture if the money lavished on it makes it unique and not the product of a tired formula. It is even more sensible, in my view, to make a small budget picture which is unique because it is unusual. I shall only get *Akenfield* made by taking my technicians into partnership with me on a sharing basis, really doing the thing cheaply.

I am personally glad that the easy years of American investment are over. They did not encourage uniqueness of product because the Americans were, and are, essentially absentee landlords. What we have to sell here is British creative talent—writers, actors, directors. Absentee landlords are not the best judges of how to cherish the uniqueness of those talents. It's always subject to 'the coast'.

We have to recognise that we have allowed the British film industry to collapse. Now the Americans have gone, there is no industry. I would like to see small budget pictures financed by Government in the same way that the Arts Council has encouraged the theatre. In this way experiments could be tried and new talents developed. I don't want a nationalised industry. I do want competition. I think that the cinema industry depends on a dialogue between art and commerce to maintain its health. At the moment it is all commerce. A national film production unit could put the commercial boys on their toes.

The renaissance in the British theatre has really been produced by subsidy. I believe this has had a good effect on the commercial theatre as well. A great deal of the British commercial theatre now has heavy American investment in it. But so far the Americans have not taken over. If they do, the product will cease to be home-grown, and the West End

will become an extension of Broadway. There will then be nothing to export. The parallel with the present state of the film industry is obvious.

But I believe that the present chaos will finally be healthy. The industry as a whole has to recognise that films no longer automatically make money. It is incredible that it has taken twenty years for this fact to sink into anybody's head. I believe that everybody concerned with films gets paid too much. The present move for profit participation, if the film is a success, is the only way to make a picture. But then we all have to know where the money goes. I don't want a profit participation in a picture when I know I shall only get a cut *after* the overheads of an enormous company have been paid. Because of this, we are left with a situation where everybody—stars, directors, producers, agents—steals everything they can lay their hands on. The fat days were so fat that the word 'film' is enough to double the price of everything. Last autumn, I shot a picnic scene with Ursula Andress and Stanley Baker on the bank of a reservoir. Beneath us 75 people were drinking coffee and eating hotdogs. About eight of us were working.

Because of the fat pickings of the past, the industry is still full of entrepreneurs who, as a theatre man, I find a new breed. The theatre has insufficient profits in it to encourage the kind of middle-men who are out to make quick money from talent. I have had innumerable encounters with American film gentlemen who put up at a good hotel, ring me up, ask me if I am interested in making a film of a newly published book I subsequently discover they don't own, and then ask me, after an amiable meeting, which companies are prepared to finance me in making a picture . . . I am very glad that the present slump has sent these wheeler-dealers from our shores.

I don't believe that Swinging London was ever anything but an invention of *Time* magazine. They were the first to tell me that I was running a swinging theatre company at Stratford and at the Aldwych Theatre. Perhaps Swinging London made a few extra promoters come to our shores, but I don't believe it helped to make pictures or to sell them.

I think its influence was insignificant.

I believe that a director must only do what he wants to do. But personally I think that directors should direct. Here I am speaking for myself. I need to work, and I believe I work better if I continue to work. I know many talented directors who spend so long waiting for the right subject that the actual act of making a film becomes a rarity that makes them paralytic with nerves.

I couldn't direct a picture well that I didn't find attractive in some way. But I think that categories such as 'commercial' or 'specialist' are something invented by critics and not film-makers. I think it better to make a film which interests one in some respect than to sit at home and worry about the masterpiece you may never make.

I believe that the cinema as a building and a social activity is dying and may soon be dead. I fail to see why anyone should go out to a run-down building and see a film projected in inadequate conditions. It may be that cinema buildings in large cities—modernised and comfortable—will survive. It may be that the young will always go to the cinema because they want to get away from their parents. But what about entertaining their parents? Distributors and producers have pursued the young audience so hard that I believe they have lost their *total* audience. I hate audiences which are minorities of any kind (young, old, working-class, aristocratic, intellectual). Such an audience is unresponsive because it is unrepresentative.

But as the cinema will decline, I believe that film-making, paradoxically, will increase. Within a few years, we shall all be playing film on cassettes on our television sets at home. We shall subscribe to libraries, and have new films on first release at home. Who will care to go to the cinema? I think the cinema owners and distributors are running wild because they fear (with reason) that their day is over. If within the very near future, the makers of video-hardware can agree on standards for new developments in home projection, I believe there will be such an explosion of movie-making that the present problems will be seen as the death of the old system.

PETER HALL DIRECTS DAVID WARNER AND STANLEY BAKER IN "PERFECT FRIDAY".



MA BARKER TO VON RICHTHOFEN

Roger Corman talks
to Philip Strick

ROGER CORMAN was standing in the middle of a field in Ireland with a swarm of single-seater planes buzzing like hornets in the sky above his head. 'They're making my film up there!' he announced delightedly as the crackle of gunfire drifted down from the clouds, one of the hornets developed a streaming tail of smoke, and a vivid red triplane did an elegant victory roll. The weather, it seemed, had been terrible but Corman, unperturbed, was bang on schedule. Even as we watched, four sequences from his new film, *Von Richthofen and Brown*, were being shot simultaneously, and his ground-crew, a mixture of Irish, English and American, had a distinctly breathless look. 'On this picture I'm just the Air Traffic Controller,' Corman said. 'I walk up and down the airfield a couple of times and the pilots just seem to take off and get busy. I won't need to do any work until the actors turn up.'

As the aircraft drifted back to the ground, however, he was waiting for them, deciding the need for retakes and checking the cameras that were stuck all over them in unlikely places. A helicopter landed and Corman went into discussion with his art director—Jimmy Murakami who, after a notable career in animation, is shortly to direct his first feature and, like many directors before him, has been given the chance of some preliminary experience as part of Corman's team. Around the airfield, hangars and full-size mock-ups of First World War planes were being constructed with dizzying speed. It seemed an incalculable distance away from the hermetic world of Roderick Usher, but one of the many surprises that Corman can produce is the ability to make any subject his own.

* * *

A gangster film, a science-fiction fantasy, and now the story of von Richthofen. Why the contrasts?

Very broadly, I believe that I'm attempting to deal in an honest fashion with what is taking place in the world today, which is a slightly pretentious statement even as I say it but is nevertheless the nearest I can get to an explanation. Given this preoccupation, I have the choice of approaching the subject directly, in which case I seem to run into censorship difficulties, or indirectly through horror films, science-fiction and so forth, where the issues seem more acceptable in their disguised form. All of my films have been concerned simply with man as a social animal, although in the 1950s I was a more hopeful person from a liberal standpoint, whereas more recently, in common with many other Americans, I have become somewhat harder in my opinions, presenting possibly a somewhat blacker look at the world today. I think my choice of subjects for filming is undoubtedly influenced by this, although I should add that I've never made the film I wanted to make—no matter what happens, it never turns out exactly as I had hoped.

What attracted you particularly to the subject of BLOODY MAMA?

As it happens, this was one of the few scripts I have shot recently that I did not develop personally. It was written by Bob Thom for AIP as an original script, and I chose to do the subject as part of my contract, selecting it out of a number of scripts that they offered me and doing some rewriting on it myself. What attracted me to it wasn't so much the subject matter, at least not consciously. It was just the best-written script, and I thought I could make a good picture out of it. As a matter of fact I almost turned it down because of the subject matter. I thought there was going to be an inevitable comparison with *Bonnie and Clyde*, and why should I get myself into that? And then I thought it was still the best script, and I can't worry about what some critic is going to



ROGER CORMAN WITH HIS VON RICHTHOFFEN, JOHN PHILIP LAW.

say in six months or a year, so I went ahead. The *New York Times* said it was a better picture than *Bonnie and Clyde*, and other critics have said it was a cheap imitation, so I knew I'd been right all along!

When I got into it, what worried me was not so much any resemblance to Penn's picture as that the script had a great deal of perverted sex which I didn't want to go into that deeply. I eased back very heavily on those scenes. AIP supported me in this, as they wanted the film to be an art-house release. As far as *Bonnie and Clyde* went, my decision was not to romanticise or glorify but to stay closer to what I felt the reality was. I had pictures of the Barkers and I knew what they looked like—they were *not* handsome or pretty. I did a fair amount of research into the period, and it was from a magazine article that I got the scene of the alligator. The gang was hiding out at a lake in Florida and they simply got bored and went out in this boat with a submachine-gun



"BLOODY MAMA": SHELLEY WINTERS IN THE CHILDBIRTH SEQUENCE.

and shot up this alligator, a stupid action which led to their discovery by the police.

Where did the documentary shots in the film come from?

I hired a young researcher, a student from UCLA, who unearthed quite a bit of film from which I chose the shots I wanted. I have no idea where the Wall Street crash montage came from—possibly a 1930s Warner Brothers picture, or a *March of Time*—but it was obviously the simplest way to show the financial chaos of the whole country. I used documentary to relate the picture to the actuality of the period in a broad way; we talked about the Stock Market crash, we talked about the Depression, but at the same time we talked about Aimee Semple McPherson (a great evangelist of the period with a tremendous radio following), Lindbergh, the Ku Klux Klan, and so on, trying to tie together the significant and the trivial to show that in fact it's *all* significant. The Ku Klux Klan parade was put in because I had never known that the Klan had paraded in those numbers in Washington. I was really thinking of the current protests, and the fact that people are parading on generally left-wing-to-liberal protests, but here there was a right-wing group that had paraded.

You give a lot of emphasis to the religious activities of the Barkers.

This was historically a vital part of their family life. She took her sons to church most Sundays whenever it was possible for them to go, all the way through their lives. She was a very firm believer.

The gang even uses a church as a hideout after the kidnapping.

Well, that's *not* actually how it happened. The script had them hiding out beside a lake, and I figured we had had enough of houses beside lakes by that time, so I started looking around for something interesting in Arkansas and we eventually ran into this old negro chapel. It seemed to me the only place that was really right, particularly in view of Ma Barker's beliefs.

The opening sequence of the film, establishing the formation of Ma Barker's character by showing her being raped by her family as a young girl, seems ambiguous as to whether she was horrified by the experience or had become reconciled to it.

Oh, she's horrified. On the other hand it probably will happen again and she knows it, and it may well have happened previously. I made a point of not establishing or saying in any way that this was the first time it had happened to her. Something to notice there, by the way, is that she refers to her own children, the sons she will have, in the past tense, although of course they are not yet born. On the one hand this is simply an error in grammar, but you can go beyond that and say that she's thinking ahead in order to get herself out of an unsatisfactory present, and she's already telling the story of her life as though it's a flashback. This makes quite a neat lead-in to the beginning of the film, which originally was a scene, immediately after the credits, of Ma Barker giving birth to her last child.

I thought this particular sequence worked very well—it had to do with the relationship between Ma Barker and her husband, what she expected from her children, and what she thought of her father. Shelley played it rather well. And we went from there into the children as early teenagers and the stealing of a gold ring from a negro who was being lynched, and from that into the scene where they have given the ring to their mother. These sequences were taken out by AIP in an attempt to make the film play faster. I felt the film always went fast and was never in any way a slow picture, and they should have stayed in as important contributory scenes to the understanding of the relationships in the film. They explained a great deal. For example several people have told me that



they 'didn't know who the girl was at the beginning; there's a danger now of confusing her with the girl the boys are supposed to have raped before the Sheriff pays them a visit. There's been a lot of chopping—I wouldn't even use the word cutting—which has damaged the film: such as a scene in which Mona turns down the ring that Herman steals from the jeweller's shop, so that he gives it to Ma instead.

Is there anything in the missing sequences that expands more fully the obsession Herman has with his father's eyes?

No, the references here are intact. The eyes are primarily a symbol for the father and, going further, they have links with the Oedipus story and the fact that the battle for the possession of the mother is a necessary part of growing up. Oedipus, having won that battle, was forced to tear out his eyes. Herman and the other boys, never having had to go through that battle because their father was so weak, might well use the eyes as a symbol for the fact that they achieved a 'nothing' victory.

The end of Herman is the shot of the machine-gun blasting straight into the eyes of the audience . . .

Well, I wasn't conscious of pushing the analogy quite so far! Historically, Herman actually did kill himself in that way (although not at the scene of the fight). Also it's not too easy to do the scene any other way without complicated effects. But it's true that it does complete the Oedipus story.

What is the reason for his suicide? It seems a little out of character.

It's his realisation that it's over; the growing derangement of Ma Barker has reached the point at which she has simply flipped. There's nothing left at all. It's significant that when he took over their troubles truly began. No matter how many mistakes she made, no matter how emotionally troubled she was, she ran the gang well. It was Herman who had brought

whenever there was shooting—so long as there were more police than gangsters so that it was safe. We met people who claimed to have known the Barkers in Arkansas and got a lot of stories about them, most of them probably untrue. It is fact, however, that Ma Barker was the last to die, which of course was very useful dramatically.

Her influence had been on the wane for some time, according to the film.

I wanted to show Ma Barker's authority beginning to erode from the point at which she insists on killing Rembrandt, the girl Lloyd picks up out of the lake. The point was that Ma was the brains of the gang (this is historically true) and most of her decisions were made logically and intelligently for the type of operation they were doing. But Rembrandt's was not a necessary death—it would have been possible to find a different way out of that situation.

So it was the first cold-blooded, unmotivated killing they'd done. And it was also, at least to some of them, evidence that she was behaving a little irrationally and with a certain jealousy of the fact that Lloyd was attracted to another woman, a threat to her control. She had allowed Mona to join the gang on the basis that she was common property and was there to service them all, whereas Rembrandt offered an inducement to one member only, to move outside the gang. From that moment on, they began to question her authority, and it culminated with her decision to kill Pendlebury. An additional factor was Ma's seduction of Pendlebury in apparent contempt for the emotions of her sons who were watching. What I was hoping for was to set up the series of events leading to her final decision that he was to be killed, and at the same time to her sons' conclusion that Ma was no longer rational.

It struck me that you use water as a conscious link between the various stages of the family's career. After the murder on the ferry you end the scene with the boat halted seemingly permanently in mid-stream. There's a similar effect with the dumping of the girl's body in the lake, and again for the alligator-shooting sequence when the news of Lloyd's death leaves the two men drifting aimlessly in their canoe.

This was intentional, but I can't give you a full explanation of it—I never defined it for myself. The primary forces—fire, water, the elements—symbolise certain natural powers and drives, and there may be a cleansing element in there as well. For instance, in the Poe pictures I used fire a number of times; so many times, in fact, for the necessary destruction of the

"GAS-S-S-I!": BRUCE KARCHER AS EDGAR ALLAN POE.

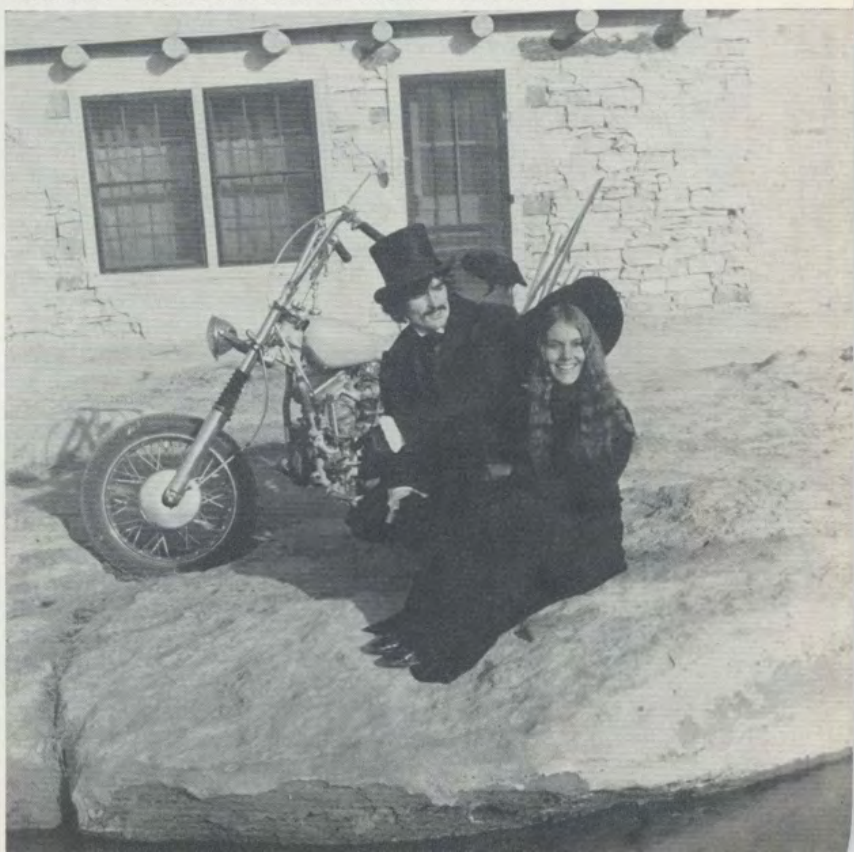


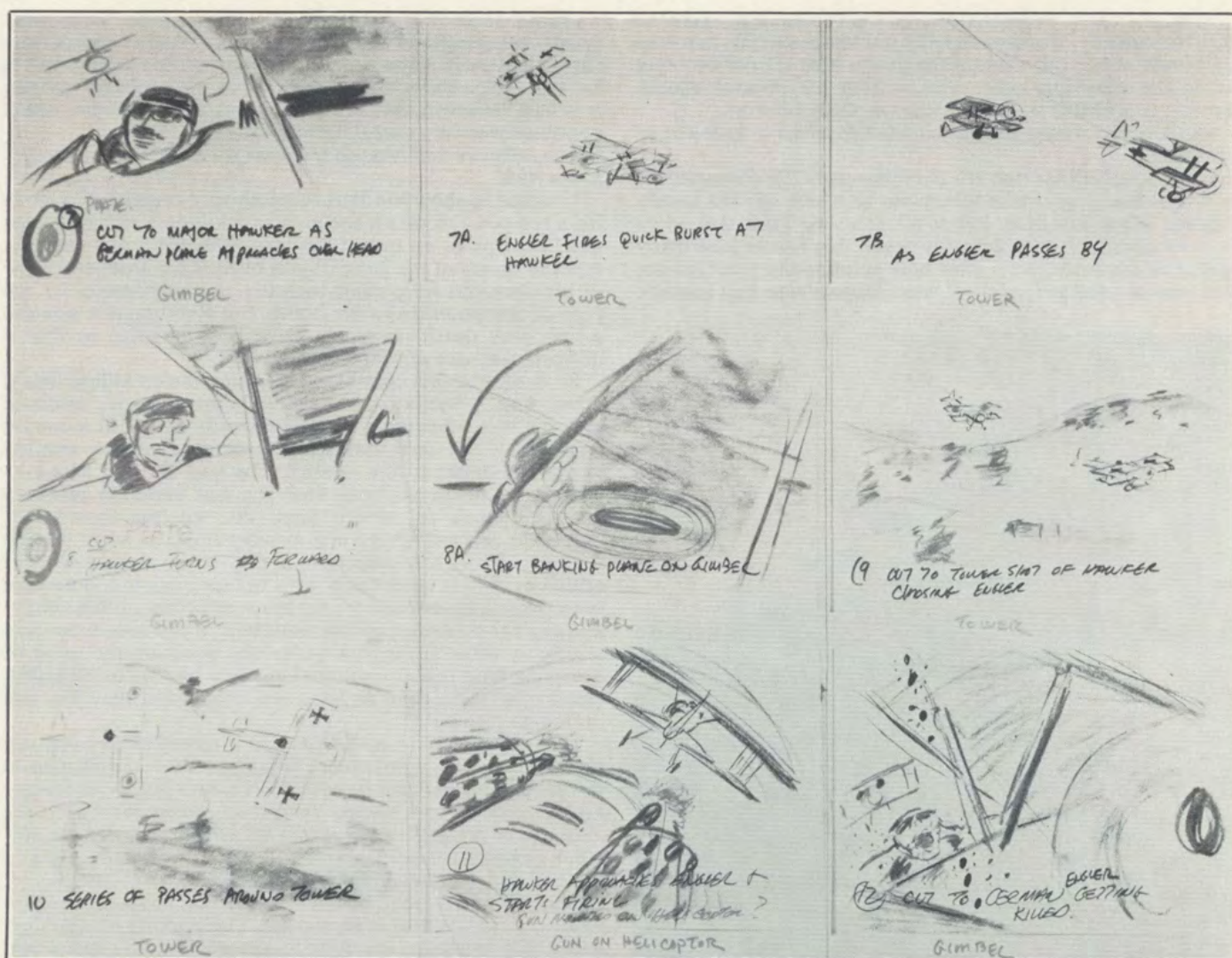
"BLOODY MAMA".

them to this level, who had caused the deaths of his brothers—they had reached a point where she couldn't run the gang any more and he simply was not capable of it.

I understand that the Barker family split up some time before the end and were not in fact all present for the final shoot-out as they are in the film.

I simply felt that as far as the story was concerned it was better to keep them together. It was important dramatically to show the family unit being shattered from outside as well as from within. One idea I had while we were on location was for local sightseers to turn up and watch. We were scouting this location and I was looking at this house, and the idea just came to me that people come to see gangster films, so how much more natural it would be for them to come out to see the gangsters themselves, rather like people watching gladiatorial contests in Rome, or bullfights today. The police who surrounded the house were all policemen off duty, and I later talked with their Chief of Police, from Little Rock, and he said it was true that there tended to be an audience





STORYBOARD SKETCHES BY JIMMY MURAKAMI FOR AN AIR BATTLE IN "VON RICHTHOFEN AND BROWN".

house, that when I came to do *The Terror* I said 'We're going to flood this house.' I don't think I've ever analysed what these uses stand for, other than natural force, on the basis that (to quote certain religions) we are all one, and we come out of natural elements.

You intercut the shots of the pig choking along in the water with the discovery of Lloyd's death. Why the close connection?

Actually at one time I was going to intercut it even more and intercut it into the funeral. I had one cut of the picture where I did do that and I felt it was too heavy, that I was pushing the point again that we are all one: the pig, the alligator, Lloyd, that these are all living forces and all of these things die, some violently, some by other means, and that this is simply a natural process of life and death. But when I intercut the pig more deeply into Lloyd's funeral I discovered it was beginning to have a connotation I didn't intend (which was that Lloyd was a pig). So I came back and used much less cutting—I was simply talking about death as a general, natural phenomenon. It was all part of my feeling about the Barkers, that their primary basic force was pre-civilisation; they came out of the hills, they were hillbillies, they had certain basic desires and drives that were only slightly modified by civilisation—for instance, the use of incest, that is the ban on incest, is a ban primarily imposed by civilisation. The Barkers were too early for that.

Having settled with the Barkers, you turned to GAS-S-S! OR IT BECAME NECESSARY TO DESTROY THE WORLD IN ORDER TO SAVE IT, which to judge from your own descriptions seems to be as crazy as its title. Where did the idea for this one come from?

It was an original story of mine but it changed rather radically as we worked on it. My first idea was to do a science-

fiction picture with some allegorical overtones, and I went through the first draft with George Armitage, a young writer who'd never written a script before. I thought there was some good work in it, but the points I was trying to make in the script either did not come through or came through too obviously in different parts, and it became less and less science-fiction and more and more a direct liberal left-wing statement picture. I didn't want to be quite that obvious about what I was doing. So I then decided to switch it to a comedy, thinking back to *Bucket of Blood* and *Little Shop of Horrors*.

This was the ideal subject for a black comedy: the U.S. Army Chemical Warfare Testing Centre accidentally uses a bottle of newly developed gas instead of a champagne bottle to christen a new chemical warfare unit, and the gas works on the enzymes of the body and kills everybody over 25 of instant old age. As the U.S. President says on television shortly before he dies, it's a human error anybody could have made. The subtitle of the film—*It Became Necessary to Destroy the World in Order to Save It*—came from a notorious incident in Vietnam when a lieutenant secured a village from Vietcong infiltration by wiping it out completely and gave as his reason that this was the only way the village could be saved.

United Artists paid for the script but their production department decided the film could not be done well for less than two million dollars, and because it's an experimental kind of picture they refused to gamble that much money. I then bought the script back from them and made it myself on a four-week schedule around Texas and New Mexico for a little bit less than 300,000 dollars, and made a pick-up

deal with AIP whereby they paid me in advance my negative cost, the money I invested in the film. If it makes any money we'll split and see what happens. There are themes in it which go back through all my previous pictures, such as the theme of the destruction of the world which I've played with to a certain extent, and there are some political and religious overtones that I've dealt with before, but I've never put them all together like this. The film became something I firmly believed in.

Do you see GAS-S-S! as a political film?

I think there was always a political overtone in my films. With the exception of *The Intruder*, I tried not to put it on the surface, I felt it should develop out of the picture itself. If the audiences got the implications, fine; if they didn't it was just as well. I wasn't trying to push it. I feel that a film really is a two-way street, that you present something and the audience brings something and the net result is the meeting between the film and the audience, and if you say what you have to say just flatly there is no interaction.

I've always felt that *The Intruder*, which I believed in very much, became too overt, a little too much of a lecture. So since then I've moved back. *The Wild Angels* was to me an intensely political film; *The Trip* was a more political film but I took out a couple of scenes that I'd written myself, on the basis again that it was a little too political, or at least too sociological (two different ways of saying the same thing). GAS-S-S! is intensely political because—well, the cliché word today is polarisation. If you were a vague liberal at one time, there's a tendency now to become rather more radical. Liberal ideas, although they've worked in part, have not worked as fast as they should have done.

By contrast with GAS-S-S!, the idea for VON RICHTHOFEN had been with you for some time?

Originally it was just *Von Richthofen*, and when 20th Century-Fox called me in a few years ago and asked me for any ideas, I told them this one and I told them about *St. Valentine's Day Massacre*. They had just bought *The Blue Max*, so we settled for the alternative and I put *Von Richthofen* away until United Artists offered me a deal about eighteen months ago. They liked the idea but felt it was too much of a German picture, so in the discussions I agreed to make it *Von Richthofen and Brown* and do a dual story about the Red Baron and the man who shot him down, cutting back and forth between their careers. Inevitably von Richthofen is the more glamorous character; for me, he represents the last of the knights, the last of the great heroes. When he was shot down, Sir Lancelot, Sir Galahad were shot down. Roy Brown represents the first of the faceless—I shouldn't say that, because we're working on this point in the script—the beginning of the concept of mass warfare.

In other words, von Richthofen was an aristocrat, the son of a Prussian officer, he was placed in a military school at the age of six, and until he died was involved in military affairs in the army or air force. Roy Brown was a wheat farmer from Saskatchewan, who happened to have great reflexes and to be a natural pilot—if anything he was the better pilot, as von Richthofen was a killer, not a pilot. Their contest marks the end of an era, particularly in that the man who replaced von Richthofen was Hermann Goering, who showed a new way for Germany to develop. Also we found that when children build model aeroplanes today, they buy more World War I kits than they do World War II; many young people can tell you the names and the exploits of the pilots of World War I, but nobody knows anything about great pilots in World War II.

What fascinated you about von Richthofen?

I think something about the character of the man himself. I can't tell you why, but it seems that in some area I'm involved with great losers. I was preparing a script on Robert E. Lee for United Artists and then I decided that I didn't want to do it—it wasn't good enough. And I've been playing for years with treatments and ideas on the story of Judas. All these were extremely interesting people who seemed to be on the wrong side, and fought very bravely in that capacity. At the same time, von Richthofen has other intriguing

aspects: there's no doubt that the desire to hunt was in his basic nature. He collected little trophies for each kill, and by the time of his death he had over 80 silver trophies around his room. He would tear off bits and pieces of the planes he shot down and put them on the wall. He said in one interview that after scoring a kill he had no desire to score another for about fifteen minutes. The fact that he flew a red plane at a time when everybody was camouflaging their planes, I find phenomenal. He said, in effect, 'I am the leading ace on both sides in this war, and if anybody has the nerve to come against me he knows how to find me.' The sexual connotations are obvious, and at the same time there's egotism and the death-wish combined with it all. He's a really splendid subject to have to tackle on film. . .

Bloody Mama

Reviewed by Tom Milne

ON THE SOUNDTRACK RECORDING of *Bloody Mama* there is a mysterious, haunting moment when a child's voice wavers uncertainly into a reprise of the gaily mocking ballad which serves as a title song, turning it, in fact, into the lullaby the lyrics are begging for:

*'Ma-ma
Bloody ma-ma
Sing me a lullaby
Ma-ma
Bloody ma-ma
We'll meet in that sweet by-and-by.'*

Somewhere along the way this has disappeared from the film, but the note of innocent yearning remains, lending a curious vulnerability to Ma Barker and her sons as seen through Corman's eyes.

He certainly hasn't glamorised them, in the sense that they are not beautiful people like Penn's Bonnie and Clyde, and yet they are undoubtedly romantic creations, viewed through an intense awareness that they were born on the dark side of the moon of a society which offered them no choice but to live a dead-end existence of one kind or another. The opening sequence of Kate Barker's rape as a child by her father and brothers, ravishingly shot in pale, sunbathed colours, melts into one of those paradises of inbred decay so familiar from the Southern novels of Faulkner and Carson McCullers: a wooden shack nestling idyllically in the trees, father sleepy in straw hat and overalls, mother plump and already ageing through the tell-tale signs of the baby doll. What else could such an environment make of Ma Barker's four sons—born out of the coldly impertinent logic of her father's words as she protested her rape, 'You ain't hospitable, Kate. Don't know why you ain't hospitable. Blood's thicker than water'—but asocial, amoral apostles of violence?

Immediately, though, Corman extends his frame of reference by setting Kate's escape with her sons from the confines of Joplin, Missouri, against newsreel footage of the period. The world in which the Barkers play out their personal drama is one in which Mammon has fallen and God has risen (the Wall Street crash, on the one hand, with its lesson that hard work is no way to make money; and on the other, the preachings of Billy Sunday and Aimee Semple McPherson, with their message that you too can see the glory of the Lord). It is also a world in which humanity is trampled in the mud (tired dancers trudging through one of the ghoulish marathons celebrated in *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?*; a negro swinging at the end of a lynching rope and Ku Klux Klanners parading proudly through the streets of Washington), and in which the supreme accolade is reserved for the spirit of enterprise and adventure (Lindbergh's flight across the Atlantic, or the bootleg gangsters whom Corman tactfully does not quote). Push all this reality into the looking-glass of fantasy and you have the Barkers, getting rich quick the easy way by robbing and murdering expendable fellow-citizens, celebrating with hymn-singing sessions led by Ma, and themselves becoming the object of admiration and envy.

America in the Thirties, Bloody Mama and her boys: they are the head and tail of the same coin.

All sociologically accurate, of course, but by no means the extent or even the main focus of Corman's interest in the Barkers. As a true film-maker of terror, he sees them as driven by darker, more inexplicable impulses, and doomed to work their own destruction as fanatically as the hapless descendants of the House of Atreus. As Ma and her sons set out from Joplin and rattle down dusty country roads in a car stolen from the local sheriff, there is a strong superficial resemblance to *Bonnie and Clyde* in the joyous amateurishness with which they embark on their career of crime, holding up a ferryman for a few dollars, committing a smash-and-grab on a jeweller's to obtain a trinket for a girl, and whisking away from a bank robbery with four matrons of America clinging precariously to the running-boards as hostages. But where *Bonnie and Clyde* gradually discover exterior reality and come to terms with the real meaning of their relationship just as the police net catches up with them and they die tumbled over and over like the rabbits in *La Règle du Jeu*, the Barker boys are driven closer and closer to a confrontation of the skull beneath their skin. For them, death under a hail of bullets almost as merciless comes as a release from the intolerable pain of what they have seen.

As Corman suggests, the Oedipus theme is pivotal, not only because the eldest son Herman's destiny is a pristine restatement of the myth (from his initial betrayal of the father who is left behind because Kate has no need of him now that her sons are grown up, to his final atonement when he turns his gun on himself and blows his face to bits), but because it gives the resonance of curiously twisted ritual to certain key scenes in which Herman offers violence to men and subsequently weeps with uncontrollable remorse in his mother's arms. For instance, the farmer on the ferry whom he murders after standing for a moment poised immobile with his boot on the victim's neck; and more particularly, the jeweller whom he threatens with a shard of glass from a display case, muttering 'Maybe I just ought to take out one of your eyes for good luck.'

Herman's amazed discovery in this scene that the jeweller has 'eyes like my pa' gradually takes on the dimensions of an obsession, culminating in the extraordinary sequence where he insists on removing the blindfold from Mr. Pendlebury, the kidnap victim who has somehow slipped into the role of substitute father to all the Barker boys during his captivity, and whom Herman subsequently refuses to kill in defiance of Kate's orders. Ordinarily speaking, so explicit an analogy with the Oedipus myth in a gangster film would doubtless seem pretentiously over-Freudian. Here it works perfectly because it is so firmly anchored in the marvellously under-

stated moment of uncomprehending desolation at the beginning of the film with which Pa Barker accepts his wife's cool announcement that he is to be left behind as a useless appendage, and because the image of his mystified, doglike hurt must inevitably surface as the boys begin to withdraw in horror from their mother's suffocating possessiveness.

The inner mechanism of the film is therefore the process whereby each of the boys, at first completely submissive to Kate's exclusive love, begins to fashion an independent existence for himself—Herman with Mona, Freddie with Kevin, Lloyd with his lady of the lake—only to be frustrated by Kate's impossible demands. Appropriately enough, the image that haunts the film is one of water—not only because of its symbolic connotations with maternity and its intimations of peace, but because the text of the film is 'blood is thicker than water'. The first crisis in their career, Herman's murder of the farmer on the ferry, ends on a point of puzzled stasis with a long shot of the whole family suspended motionless in mid-stream. The last, leading directly to their massacre by the police, is introduced by a tranquil shot of Lloyd silhouetted against the hazy waters of the lake as he prepares to give himself a fatal injection; and followed, after the discovery of his body, by a second moment of stasis as Herman, hunting alligators with a tommy-gun on the lake, sits drifting in his boat, apparently indifferent to the news of Lloyd's death. In between comes the storm centre of the film: Lloyd's touchingly awkward, abortive little romance with the girl who swims up out of the lake as he sits dangling his feet in the water, a vision of glory to his drug-crazed mind who has to be drowned in a bath and buried in the lake by Ma's orders because she may betray them to the police. 'She was so cute I just had to take a shot at her,' explains Lloyd beatifically. 'There's nothing you won't do, Ma,' says Mona after the murder; and from that moment Kate's authority begins to disintegrate, finally crumbling under the refusal of all four sons to carry out her instructions to kill Pendlebury.

In each case, counterpointing the image of water, is the blood spilled by Herman—literally with the farmer on the ferry and the alligator sprayed with machine-gun bullets just prior to the discovery of Lloyd's body, and by implication with the girl drowned in the bath. Since 'blood is thicker than water', the wistful glimpses of happiness seen through a glass darkly and barely comprehended by the Barker boys are necessarily enveloped by the terrible holocaust of their end; and since the reason for the break-up of the gang is Herman's realisation that Kate has been exploiting his hunger for violence, it is both appropriate and inevitable that the only escape from her should be in death.

On the other hand there is a curious gap left unfilled by the final shoot-out with the police. Lloyd is already dead. Mona is sent off to Miami by Herman ('Just drop me a line when you get there'), who subsequently kills himself. Freddie rushes out of the house into a stream of police bullets after Kevin has tried to opt out and been shot in the back by Kate. And Kate herself, all her sons dead, dies sobbing and unrepentant with her machine-gun to her shoulder. The enigma is the fourth son, Arthur, the quiet one who has no dream of his own and who dies, unexpectedly, trying to protect Kate. In Robert Thom's original script, more logically, Herman disappears in search of his father, while Arthur takes up with Mona and dies in a bank robbery, leaving a letter which refers to a son, 'little charlee'.

One can see why Corman decided to keep the Barkers together, to have them die destroyed both from without and within. Nevertheless, traces of Arthur's original role as the perpetrator of the Barker legend do remain in the film, inexplicable without reference to the original script—in particular a shot of Arthur gently touching the pregnant Mona's belly under the trees as they wander towards Lloyd's dead body—and make one wish that Corman had completed his tale of doom and destiny with the hint of cyclical prophecy suggested in Thom's script: 'And so, the Barkers were gone. Unless, indeed, there is a "charlee", which no one with any sense would doubt for a moment. There is.' Here, surely, is the source of that wavering child's voice singing 'Ma-ma, bloody ma-ma, sing me a lullaby . . .'

"BLOODY MAMA": BRUCE DERN, DON STROUD.



IN THE PICTURE

Teaching Film

OPEN-MINDED, UNDOGMATIC, socially responsible and closely connected to contemporary life: these are the sort of qualities that Colin Young ascribes to his ideal film school. Next year he has the chance to begin to realise the ideal in Britain when the National Film School opens with him as its first director.

Behind him are a St. Andrews degree in philosophy, a variety of jobs in the American film industry and an M.A. in Theater Arts (Film) at the University of California, Los Angeles. He has been Professor and Chairman of UCLA's Department of Theater Arts, where half of the more than 1,000 students study film. He also has had firsthand observation of how several European schools work.

The Czech Film School, as he saw it at work in 1967 even before Dubcek's rise to power, impressed him most. 'It was first of all,' he recalls, 'quite open to its students' ideas. But it put this openness in the context of a strong social responsibility. And I emphasise that it was social and not socialist. There was no political dogma about what they should do and how they should do it. But there was a very strong idea that those who had been selected to go to a school of that sort had an obligation to make films which were relevant to their contemporaries in their country.'

In Western countries it is harder to assess how a film school has affected the national film industry. But Young cites the connection between the Italian film school and the growth of neo-realism and welcomes the fact that Rossellini has now taken over the school. 'He probably will redevelop the old idea that the cinema in Italy needs a kind of support from the young intellectual that at the moment it seems to be losing.'

Events in the United States after the invasion of Cambodia and the killings at Kent State re-emphasised for Young how contemporary an art the cinema is. Until then student and underground film-makers had been preoccupied with the desire to overthrow current ideas on sexual morality. 'But there was a moment in California when a black student said that finally our students had recognised that there was something in the world more interesting than genitalia to turn their cameras on, and that perhaps they would be more interested in analysing their society and making



"LE CERCLE ROUGE": JEAN-PIERRE MELVILLE WITH ALAIN DELON AND SAMURAI SWORD.

comments about it.' As a result, during the post-Cambodia campus unrest, UCLA's film school 'turned itself into the eyes and ears of the revolution,' a phrase that Young relishes. Students mounted daily film and video-tape reports on the events of the crisis.

Young compares this direct involvement in events with the one-time discussions among British film-makers about social commitment. 'The old arguments always ignored the fact that there was an enormous filter and smokescreen between the film-maker and his audience,' he says. 'That is to say he had to organise his thoughts in a totally industrial way in an industry he did not control before he could report back to the people in the audience. What young film-makers want to do is to make that connection as tight as possible and to base their work on the events of the moment as much as possible.'

Not that he rejects the need for the graduates of the British school, financed by public money, to benefit the well-being of the industry, meaning in effect to find an audience for their work. It will not be a school for 'weekend film-makers'. He cites the competitive bidding by exhibitors in the United States for the right to show UCLA's student-made films as evidence of the audience for such works even before their makers turn professional. 'The jump from doing a successful student film to doing a successful commercial film is a major problem,' he admits. 'I would hope that the British school could face this problem in advance by not segregating the work people do as students from the work they will later do as professionals.'

The complaint of today's film-makers that they work in the dark and lack mutual contact is in Young's mind when he says that a British school should 'provide a way of a new generation forming'. He lists the advantages which graduates typically think they gain from a film school. 'One is the opportunity to see a lot of films in a short period in a fairly controlled situation where they can make maximum use of having seen them. The second is to have been in the company of people who had precisely similar problems to theirs, approaching them more or less systematically. And the third is

having the access to equipment made much simpler. Way down the line they say it was nice to get a class from Professor So-and-So, but they always think of that as an afterthought.'

Young's lack of preconceptions on curriculum is in part a reaction to the slavish way in which he has seen others teaching technique. In selecting his own teachers he says: 'Our problem will be to find technicians sympathetic to the idea that absolutely nothing has yet been proven about the way technique works in creating a good film, with minds completely open to the idea that every technique that has been invented can be reinvented or rediscovered or rejected.'

A recipe for disaster in Colin Young's mind would be a school which believed in indoctrinating people with its own artistic taboos. 'Film is too catholic a medium for that. If a school had a dogmatic approach it would have to be overthrown. You would have created the base for the first student revolt against the school. The only thing that would justify this kind of dogmatic approach would be a culture that had a dogmatic approach to art in general, and I don't think the British culture has that approach.'

TERENCE KELLY

Mankiewicz in London

JOE MANKIEWICZ THINKS that many of today's young film-makers owe a lot to the optical manufacturers for providing them with the vast range of telephoto and zoom lenses now available. 'We're going through a voyeuristic phase,' he said during one of his rare visits to London recently. 'People want to look and not listen. The spoken word is out temporarily, replaced by all kinds of optical imagery. Personally, I've always thought that if a director consciously comes between the screen and his audience, he's failed. When someone in a movie nudges his neighbour and says: "Wonder how they did that?" you've lost them.' His idea of a perfect film? 'One that doesn't look as if it has been directed at all.'

Mankiewicz's blue eyes widen as he talks,

each gesture accompanied by the inevitable pipe in his hand. The only director-writer ever to win four Academy Awards back-to-back from screenwriting and direction—*Letter to Three Wives* in 1949 and *All About Eve* in 1950—he had, nevertheless, not worked in Hollywood for fourteen years until he made *There Was a Crooked Man*... there for Warner Brothers last year. The script for *There Was a Crooked Man*... is by Robert Newman and David Benton, writers of *Bonnie and Clyde*, and Mankiewicz describes it as a tongue-in-cheek Western, a tilt at the mythology of the clear-cut good and bad. It is his first Western. 'I wanted to flex a few directorial muscles I hadn't used before.' *Crooked Man* was like an old boy gathering for Mankiewicz. Kirk Douglas, Henry Fonda, Hume Cronyn, Burgess Meredith—he grew up with them. 'It was fun making it. Usually I'm suspicious when a film is fun to shoot. But I think this one has turned out all right... I'd like to concentrate on directing for a while,' Mankiewicz adds, 'and leave someone else to write the screenplay. Doing both takes too much out of your life. Say six months to write and another eighteen to shoot and edit.'

Mankiewicz was a writer on the Metro lot during the Louis B. Mayer regime. Early on, he tried to persuade Mayer to let him direct a film. 'I went into his office with an idea and he listened while I outlined it. Then he shook his head and said something which has become a kind of classic Hollywood phrase. "You must crawl before you can walk. You must produce before you direct."' A slow smile. 'I've always thought that was a pretty good definition of a producer.'

One of his early mentors was Ernst Lubitsch. 'Lubitsch could do more in visual terms with a shot of a woman walking up to a door and opening it than all your zoom lenses and split screens.' For Mankiewicz, writing and directing are indivisible in cinematic terms. 'When a writer creates a screenplay he directs each scene in his head, visualising tempo, angles, lighting and

emotion. Once the script is completed either he, or somebody else, starts all over again to put it on celluloid. In the old factory days of Hollywood, though, a contract director was tossed a script on a Friday to begin shooting the following Monday. Nowadays I don't know of a top director who doesn't sit down with his writer well before shooting and go through the screenplay scene by scene.'

Which of his films would he single out? 'Well, I don't really like to do that. There are some I don't talk about at all.' Was *Cleopatra* one of those? 'Yes, and that's all I'm saying about that particular one.' A pause. 'I suppose two which stand out are *All About Eve* and *Julius Caesar*. I always wanted to present Shakespeare in cinematic terms in a contemporary style. He's an ageless writer: his themes are as potent today as when he wrote his plays—power, greed, corruption. I was determined to get away from the iambic pentameter rhythms in the speeches and I think it came off, particularly with Brando's performance. Anyway, I had hundreds of letters from students and teachers all over America thanking me for presenting Shakespeare in understandable terms.'

JOHN WILLIAMS

Secret Ceremony

IF AN INDUSTRY HABIT recently reported by *Variety* becomes standard practice, life looks like becoming even more difficult for future film historians. It has been traditional for films to be cut for television screening; the notion now being pursued by Universal in Hollywood is that films should be added to. 'In at least six titles scheduled for release to TV during 1970-71,' says *Variety*, 'stars are being brought back—in one case three years after the original was completed—to shoot additional scenes, entirely new characters are being written in and shot, and out-takes added.'

One of the first and chief sufferers from this alteration by amplification is likely to

be Joseph Losey's *Secret Ceremony*. Apparently the film was thought to be 'too ambiguous' for television. *Variety* reports a mixture of surgery and addition. 'A seven to eight minute framework of a conversation between a psychiatrist and an attorney, not in the original, discussing Miss Taylor's arrest for the murder of Mitchum, was filmed. An out-take of her confession to a priest was put back, also carrying the voice-over of the confession into other action. Two scenes, one of Miss Farrow giving a semi-nude Miss Taylor a massage that suggests a physical attraction, and another of gossip about Mitchum being a child molester, were taken out.'

The reason for all this rather expensive tinkering is not simply to sort out situations presumed to be too mystifying for television, but to stretch pictures if necessary to a 100-minute running time, American TV's minimum length. Peter Hall's *Three Into Two Won't Go*, 'had a running time of 93 minutes before the full frontal nudity was excised for TV... It also had ambiguities about Miss Geeson's character and motivation... which are now clarified for TV audiences in prologues in which officials explain why they are looking for the girl.' Another recent European-made film, Hubert Cornfield's *The Night of the Following Day*, also running seven minutes short of the statutory 100, has had out-takes added filling in more details of the police investigation.

Cuts of violence, about which the networks are said to be 'very touchy', are of course being made as well. *Eye of the Cat*, the horror thriller with Eleanor Parker in a wheelchair and a climax involving murder by a pack of domestic cats, has lost some feline action in its new version and acquired another explanatory scene—Miss Parker being recalled to the studio and her wheelchair to shoot it.

When the British films on Universal's list turn up in due course on English television, they will presumably arrive in these versions. 'When they are available, we try to consult with the original director and writer,' says the Universal official in charge of features for television. No comments from directors and writers have yet been reported.

Spellbound

Extract from:

THE HENLEY

Social Club Magazine

Vol. 1. No. 1. June, 1919. Price Threepence
GAS

She had never been in this part of Paris before—only reading of it in the novels of Duvalin, or seeing it at the Grand Guignol. So this was the Montmartre? That horror where danger lurked under cover of night; where innocent souls perished without warning—where doom confronted the unwary—where the Apache revelled.

She moved cautiously in the shadow of the high wall, looking furtively backward for the hidden menace that might be dogging her steps. Suddenly she darted into an alley way, little heeding where it led... groping her way on in the inky blackness, the one thought of eluding the pursuit firmly fixed in her mind... on she went... Oh! when would it end?... Then a doorway from which a light streamed lent itself to her vision... In here... anywhere, she thought.

The door stood at the head of a flight of stairs... stairs that creaked with age as she endeavoured to creep down... then she

PHILIPPE NOIRET AND PETER O'TOOLE IN ADVENTURE STORY FILMED IN VENEZUELA. "MURPHY'S WAR", PETER YATES' WARTIME





KIRK DOUGLAS AND MIKE BLODGETT IN "THERE WAS A CROOKED MAN . . ."

heard the sound of drunken laughter and shuddered—surely this was—No, not that. Anything but that! She reached the foot of the stairs and saw an evil-smelling wine bar, with wrecks of what were once men and women indulging in a drunken orgy . . . then they saw her, a vision of affrighted purity. Half a dozen men rushed towards her amid the encouraging shouts of the rest. She was seized. She screamed with terror . . . better had she been caught by her pursuer was her one fleeting thought as they dragged her roughly across the room. The fiends lost no time in settling her fate. They would share her belongings . . . and she . . . Why! Was this not the heart of Montmartre? She should go—the rats should feast. Then they bound her and carried her down the dark passage; up a flight of stairs to the riverside. The water rats should feast, they said. And then . . . then, swinging her bound body to and fro, dropped her with a splash into the dark, swirling waters. Down she went, down, down. Conscious only of a choking sensation, this was death . . . then . . . 'It's out, Madam,' said the dentist. 'Half a crown, please.'

HITCH

Written by Hitchcock when he was working for the Henley Cable Company. A transcription of this rare piece of pre-Hitchcock Hitchcock was recently given to the National Film Archive by Jympson Harman. Do any copies of the actual magazine still survive?

London Film School

TUCKED AWAY among the warehouses at the back of Covent Garden and almost within shouting distance of Wardour Street, the London Film School (formerly the London School of Film Technique) has for too long operated without the publicity it deserves. The best of the School's annual output of 200 films is shown at the National Film Theatre and gets an airing on the film society circuit, and this year an LFS student was nominated for the Best Short Film-Maker of 1969 in the SFTA awards. But with one or two exceptions one seldom hears

of a School graduate making the ranks of the chosen few. With the present industry crisis muffling even professional optimists it's not perhaps the most opportune moment, but the School now has the help of a public relations firm in trying to change the picture.

To judge from a selection of films recently shown to the press, the School has good reason to think its product merits a PR push. With an intake of over 200 students it would have been a simple matter to assemble the best of everything, but sensibly the selection was arranged to give an overall impression of the School's work—faltering first-term exercises as well as twenty-minute diploma films. The result was a testimonial to the School's methods, and in particular to their policy of discouraging specialisation. Here, in a small way, was evidence of something British cinema has conspicuously lacked in recent years: a manifest sense of what one might call co-operative creativity.

Not that working in a team inhibits individual imagination, at least at the later stages. Paucity of ideas (and a tendency to incorporate other people's) are the usual hallmarks of student films, and the School is no exception. The first-year exercises were mainly just that, would-be virtuoso displays of technique at the expense of story which gave the impression—rightly or wrongly—that students were being taught what they could do with the camera and the editola before they had really thought out the importance of scripting. There was a first-year film about a hanging, for instance, which was technically impeccable but in essence just one more variation on films like *Incident at Owl Creek*—the corrupter of so many amateur film-makers. The School might reply that the first hurdle is the acquisition of technique. And certainly the work of the more advanced students reveals the confidence to tackle independent ideas.

Birthday, shown at this year's Berlin Festival (where—rare event for festival shorts—it was well received), is an assured visual reflection on the childhood memories prompted by the birth of a baby. In just over six minutes it showed a real understanding of the way adult crises spark off the dark, remembered fears of childhood. The more

adventurous *Miracle of Rare Device*, about two men setting themselves up as purveyors of an imaginary mirage, was less sure of the scope of its ambition, but at times achieved—and in purely visual terms despite the philosophical slant of its dialogue—a weird, Antonioni-like sense of landscape acting on people.

Most impressive was *Anno Domini*, a twenty-minute diploma film which tries to convey the enclosed world of a monastery—the atmosphere of the place rather than the architecture. On paper an unpromising idea; but its director revealed a remarkable appreciation of the descriptive and emotive power of the simple visual image. No decoration, no tricks, no hyperbole, and all the better for it. On the evidence of films of this quality, the School is doing encouraging work. Coexistence with the proposed National Film School remains a problem for the future. Meanwhile, the studio moguls will be doing British cinema a disservice if they don't take a closer look at what the London Film School has to offer.

DAVID WILSON

Work in Progress

INGMAR BERGMAN: His first English-speaking film, *The Touch*, shooting in Stockholm and starring Elliott Gould, Bibi Andersson and Max von Sydow. ABC Picture Corporation of America.

KEVIN BILLINGTON: *The Light at the Edge of the World*, from one of the lesser known Jules Verne stories, about wreckers and a lighthouse. With Kirk Douglas, Yul Brynner and Samantha Eggar. Locations in Spain. Bryna Productions.

CLAUDE CHABROL: To follow *La Rupture* (which in his own words 'portrays the world as it will be in ten years' time if . . . a really black film') with *La Décade Prodigieuse*, based on an Ellery Queen novel about a wealthy philanthropist who marries a penniless girl, who then falls in love with his adopted son. With Orson Welles and Catherine Deneuve. Films la Boétie.

JACQUES DEMY: *Peau d'Ane*, based on Perrault's fairy-tale, with Catherine Deneuve (Princess), Jacques Perrin (Prince), Jean Marais (King), Micheline Presle (Queen) and Delphine Seyrig (Fairy). Parc.

GEORGES FRANJU: Zola's *La Faute de l'Abbé Mouret*, the story of a priest torn between faith and the flesh in the 1880s. A young actor from the Paris Conservatoire, Francis Huster, makes his screen debut in the title role. Eastman Colour. Films du Carrosse.

FRANKLIN SCHAFFNER: *Nicholas and Alexandra*, at the end of the year, for Sam Spiegel and Columbia.

Sight and Sound

STARTING FROM the next issue (Winter 1970/71), SIGHT AND SOUND will be appearing in a new and slightly larger format. The paper size will be A4 (8½" by 11½"), and binders for the magazine in this format will be available early in 1971.

At the same time, recent increases in the cost of printing and paper have made it necessary for us, in common with most other publishers, to increase our prices. The new subscription rates for SIGHT AND SOUND, starting from January 1971, will be £1.40 for one year, £2.60 for two years, and £3.80 for three years (postage included). Single copies will cost 30p (6s) from bookshops and newsagents, and 35p (postage included) if supplied from the British Film Institute publications department. In the United States, the price per copy will be \$1.25.

IT'S NOT *QUITE* ALL TRUE

Richard Wilson

In the Spring, 1970 issue of SIGHT AND SOUND we published Charles Higham's article IT'S ALL TRUE, about Orson Welles' famous, never completed, Latin American film. This was a chapter from Mr. Higham's book on Welles, since published by the University of California Press. Richard Wilson, Welles' long-time associate, and director of AL CAPONE, INVITATION TO A GUNFIGHTER, THREE IN THE ATTIC, etc. has sent us the following letter, addressed to Tom Milne. It gives for the first time his own detailed account of the production history of this extraordinary and ill-fated film.

DEAR TOM:
Good hearing from you again. Yes, I read it. And, as I said, feel there should be some comment. A certain tyranny is exerted by a title like *It's All True*. Responsibility insinuates itself upon the writer; or one assumes it has done so. Since Charles Higham in his article of that title told it like it wasn't, here and there, I would like to try to make it all truer, at least. The burden of this letter is founded on the wish that Charles had been a more rigorous cine-scholar and less exuberant cineaste.

Books and articles about Welles, published mainly in

England, France and Italy, abound in misinformation. One of the chief fonts of inaccuracy, I recognise, has been Orson himself. I'm sure I've added my share—who knows, probably to Charles' article! If memory doesn't fail, it tends to dramatise—even more, to romanticise. After all, rationalising defeat and exorcising misery comes very naturally to film-makers. All the more reason, then, for setting the history straight(er). I would have hoped that a book from the University of California would be meticulous in its scholarship. Since others may assume it is, I can't let Charles off the hook too easily.

Charles was given free access to the files from which I'm going to quote and chide him—not too ungently, I trust, because I like Charles. He did more than most others before him to dig out the truth. He did talk to lots of people who were actually involved. However, if painstaking research—months of it—spent in these same files is a criterion, then the coming Bogdanovich-Welles interview book promises to be the most definitive.

I am talking about the fifteen or so drawers of working memoranda, the frantic cables, the more expository letters, the successive drafts of scripts, making up the files that happen to be in my safe-keeping. The two or three drawers of stills help flesh out the record. They span Welles' career, and my

STREET SCENE IN RIO: WELLES AT WORK ON ONE OF THE RESTAGED CARNIVAL SCENES.



own with him, from the Mercury stage productions of *Julius Caesar*, et al, including all the Mercury's films through *Macbeth*. There is also a little pre-Mercury material.

Up to this current wave of interest in Welles, I've been generally responsive to worthwhile requests to use the files or even to send information. Once, in the midst of directing a film, I could not respond. I'd had a letter from Peter Noble asking for information for the book he was preparing. Perhaps, had I been able to answer his letter, I might have escaped flinching at a quote from one of his sources—Augusta Weissberger—that stated of *It's All True*: 'When we went to Brazil, Orson had formed a partnership with Jack Moss, and Richard Wilson was sent along by Moss to protect his interests against Orson.'

It should be comforting to come out better if duller in Charles' version: 'Welles' hastily assembled team for the Brazilian project included Richard Wilson, his faithful assistant for many years . . . Nothing that's not true so far, but I cavil at the veracity of the rest of the sentence, and of nearly every sentence to the end of that page. The completed sentence: ' . . . the cameramen Eddie Pyle, Harry Wellman, W. Howard Greene . . . and, as director of photography, Harry J. Wild.' The facts: Eddie Pyle was an operator along with the now well-known cinematographer Joe Biroc. Harold Wellman was never with us on the film. W. Howard Greene, and not Harry Wild, was the director of photography, because at that time the Kalmus' Technicolor contract with studios stipulated one of Technicolor's cameramen in order to be given one of those gigantic machines. Wild was to be the first cameraman for black and white filming only. For complicated reasons (and studio orders) the actual carnival was covered both ways.

Now these inaccuracies are small things, and maybe one shouldn't carp at them. On the other hand, perpetuation in print gives them the feel of authenticity, and subsequent writing on the subject tends to accept them as gospel.

Next sentence: 'On January 20 the first group, headed by Wilson, flew down in two chartered airliners, taking with them four Technicolor cameras, while another twelve planes left with other equipment.' The facts: Everything about the project should be put in a wartime frame of reference: wartime shortages of transportation of any kind, of equipment, cameras, film stock. As a quasi-government mission, the Welles group was sent off in one flying boat that was conveniently dispatched to bring back another Welles. The diplomatically celebrated Rio Conference was in progress at the time, and our arrival was timed to facilitate the return of Sumner Welles, the Assistant Secretary of State, and delegation in the same plane. We took with us two, not four, Technicolor cameras, having browbeaten the Technicolor Corporation into giving us one more camera than they were going to allow us. We took all the Technicolor negative stocks we could get our hands on—all 50,000 feet. The company promised us 25,000 feet 'soon'. There were *no* twelve planes.

The numbers game I play above and in what follows about planes, people, cameras and money may seem petty. On the contrary, numbers are the very heart of my objection to the portrait of Orson conveyed by Charles' article. It exudes an aura of profligacy on Orson's part, and stems directly from the accusations that hounded him *during* the making of the picture and from which he never escaped. Accepted as fact and converted into publicity both covert and overt, these rumours about *It's All True* kept Orson from making any films at all until he made *The Stranger* in 1945. That publicity, still accepted as fact, in large measure inhibits his practical freedom to make films even now. The insidious damage of Charles' piece is that, by its tone and—time and time again—by its slightly distorted detail, it is perpetuating a myth about Orson which is not deserved.

What's really and ironically true about *It's All True*, and I don't think it has ever been stated, is that Welles was approached to make a non-commercial picture, then was bitterly reproached for making a non-commercial picture. Right here I'd like to make it a matter of record: both RKO and Welles got into the project by trying to do their bit for the war effort. However: RKO, as a company responsible to

1. What is a jangada?
2. Launching of the jangada.
3. Fishing sequence.
4. Drowning of the boy.
5. Lowering of the sails and return of the jangadeiros.
6. Selling of the fish and news given to family.
7. Finding of the body.
8. Funeral?
9. Meeting and decision.
10. Departure.
11. The journey itself.
12. Arrival.



ITEMS NOT INCLUDED IN THE STORY LINE ITSELF

1. Wedding
 - a. Find out about a jangadeiro wedding.
 - b. How extensive is it?
 - c. Where held?
 - d. How are bride and groom dressed?
 - e. Is it likely that they be photographed? *(Can be - could be)*
2. Dying the clothes
 - a. Our bride does this.
 - b. Do we present this under the heading of clothes dying, or as incidental business for presenting her?
3. Necessary shot
 - a. Bride making lace, preferably with type from Iracema and other Iracema characters to round out cast.
 - ~~b. Frame of house before palms are pulled were in Iracema~~

A SCRIPT PAGE, WITH STORY OUTLINE FOR THE 'JANGADEIROS' SECTION. THE DRAWING IS BY WELLES.

stockholders, negotiated a private and tough agreement for the U.S. Government to pay it 300,000 dollars to undertake its bit. This speaks eloquently enough for its evaluation of the project as a non-commercial venture. I personally think that Orson's waiving any payment whatever for his work, and his giving up a lucrative weekly radio programme, is even more eloquent. For a well-paid creative artist to work for over half a year for no remuneration is a most uncommon occurrence.

* * *

Having digressed this much, my argument with Charles may be easier to follow if I start at the beginning of his article. Thus: as far as Flaherty's *The Captain's Chair* is concerned, we did not buy it in 1938, but in 1941, the same time we bought the Flaherty story called (another correction) *The Story of Bonito, the Bull*. 2,500 dollars was the price we had negotiated for *Bonito*, not 12,000. The story is exactly three pages long. Welles had not taken an option on it in 1936. In 1936 Welles was twenty-one years old, was just beginning his work in the Federal Theatre Project, having completed a tour as an actor with Katherine Cornell's company. Joe Noriega, characterised by Charles as 'a superb technician', turned out to be one, *but* at the time of hiring was an assistant editor. His most important qualification: he spoke Spanish. RKO looked askance at our elevating him to production manager and finally editor. If Nelson Rockefeller were behind Orson's career in any way before *It's All True*, I think Orson would be more surprised than I am. Not to mention mortified at never having taken concrete advantage of it.

I'd like to try clarifying the core issue which is raised in the sentence, 'Unfortunately, Welles allowed himself to be pressured into agreeing to get to Rio for the Carnival . . .' Here is a statement which is worse than inaccurate, it's ridiculous. The 'pressure' was self-imposed. What might have been argued against Orson was, first, whether he should have given in to the pressures to do this Inter-American venture at all. Second, whether the Carnival should, indeed, have been the main film subject.

About Carnival: that came from Brazil itself. It is not

too hard to see how their DIP (Department of Press and Propaganda) would conceive luring one of the world's most creative film-makers to make a fantastic tourist come-on (effective after hostilities ended, to be sure) centred around their fabulous Carnival. So they beckoned the gullible Yankees. I suggest the record is made even clearer when it is noted that the Brazilian official put in charge of working with us on the film was the head of the Departamento de Turismo. The weakness of the whole notion was that not Orson, not any RKO production or story executive, not one of us knew anything about Carnival. The most we could really learn was that it was a sort of super Mardi-Gras which had to be seen to be believed. This latter turned out to be literal truth.

Orson was very reluctant to give up the Jazz segment of the original *It's All True*, a project of four true stories, as Charles describes. So it was not until he learned that the soul of the Carnival was the Samba; that this music, like Jazz, was a most powerful influence in the country's popular culture; that it, like Jazz, was essentially a Negro contribution, that the Carnival subject began to seem usable to him. Even so, it was all hearsay and had to be experienced (and photographed and recorded) before it could possibly be developed into a film.

The fact that *Bonito*, one of the original four segments, was another Latin-American story and already shooting, offered an opportunity to convert *It's All True* into an Inter-American project. A change of title to *Pan-America* was even considered for a while. How non-commercial can you get?

So the pressures to do the Carnival were indeed multifaceted. The pressure to get there fast and actually see what he was supposed to be making a picture about was exerted mainly by Orson. Hard to fault him for that, it seems to me. A paragraph or two later, Charles quotes Orson from a press release as saying: 'We have pretty much in mind what we are going to do in Brazil.' Charles buries in a footnote to this that there was no time to prepare a script. I stress again that no script was possible until Welles had actually seen the carnival. May I bring out what is even more pertinent? RKO and the Co-ordinators Office understood this, and these were the ground rules accepted by all.

* * *

In the same section, Charles is testily critical of Welles for doing *Journey into Fear* before going rather than after, for recalling Norman Foster from *Bonito* in Mexico, and for not returning Norman to complete it immediately after *Journey*: '... incredibly Welles announced instead Foster would direct Dolores del Rio in a previously abandoned Mexican melodrama in April.'

In all discussion about *Bonito* and Foster, I don't think Higham or other writers have even mentioned that the Mercury-Welles contract with RKO specified that Orson direct his projects personally. This held for *It's All True* just as it did for *Kane* and *Ambersons*. Norman was technically hired as a second unit director whose function was to shoot all the background material for *Bonito* (bulls, ranches, tientas, corridas, etc.). While Orson asked him to do much, much more, it not only would have surprised RKO, but mobilised their Legal Department into action, were they informed that Norman was 'the director'.

The footage was, as Charles describes later in his article, very beautiful. It elicited from Orson eventually a cable to Norman: 'You asked me to be brutally frank. Okay. The film is absolutely wonderful. I will repeat that the film is completely marvellous, very very exciting and as beautiful as anything you ever saw in your life. From now on you are official screen credited co-director of *Bonito* and God bless you. ORSON.'

The fact remained that Orson was still contractually held to be the director. We all felt he could and should personally complete the film when he returned from Brazil.

Norman's work on *Bonito* and Norman's personal friendship with Dolores del Rio made possible his ready acceptance as director of *Journey*. RKO wanted *Journey* done. It was a studio initiated and scheduled project, taken away from another producer by Schaefer, who asked Welles to do it in August of 1941. This history combined with the other Welles

commitments (*Ambersons* shooting and *It's All True* preparing, and Welles' presence in Rio mandatory) made Norman's directing *Journey* a convenient reality.

These have been selective comments on the first page of Higham's six-page article. Obviously, it would be more economical of space and time to write a new and more accurate article. But Charles seeds so many questionable sprouts: 'A full score, using Latin-American themes, was commissioned from Paul Misraki, but never used.' This irrelevant statement is whimsically appended by Charles to quotes from press releases of Welles' description of the total film. In truth, Paul Misraki's contribution was as an arranger for one sequence only within the *Carnival* subject. It was not used because the film died still-born.

And, again, that gratuitous hint of profligacy. It's hard to pass over statements like: 'And when Welles, with his passion for elaboration, found it necessary to flesh out even this incomparably exotic material' (referring to our cameras capturing the Sambas, and the carnival excitement in village, swamp and rain forest)—'he reconstructed the carnival in a theatre . . . and a studio . . . on a still more staggering scale than the real one.' I hope this letter has already made clear: that's what it was all about; that was the plan. That's the way one constructs a picture out of three days of madness on the streets, and totally formless film material. I must land with both feet on the 'still more staggering scale' bit. Feeding the legend of profligacy again, and wrong besides.

Perhaps some time in a separate article I can comment more fully on the story line of the film as Charles constructed it versus the way it was. As we learned more down there, the structure of the *Carnival* subject altered. As Orson filmed more, it altered. There were several structures conceived for this subject, and several structures for the whole film. At one time, the whole of *Carnival*, for instance, was to be told from the viewpoint of the heroic Jangadeiros. After the tragedy of Jacare, Orson felt the need of, and proposed, a new structure for the film.

I have to admit I'm tempted not to comment on Charles' description of the tragedy because he transforms it into near-mythology. His version is so colourful, with shark and octopus battling, the fishermen standing and thus tilting the raft, Jacare disappearing, his half-digested head and arms showing up in a captured shark six days later. What fuel for legend!

Unfortunately, I have two depositions in the files, available to Charles, if not found by him, along with the log I kept of our daily activities, which was forwarded to the Co-ordinators' Office as well as to the studio.

A somewhat mundane document, it read like this (excerpted):

'TUESDAY, MAY 19TH: The basic facts of this unfortunate accident are as follows: Leo Reisler, assistant on the picture, accompanied jangadeiros to the Fluminense Yacht Club, where the Jangada was kept, witnessed its being tied to the hired launch, and instructed the jangadeiros to ride inside the launch. To further secure the jangada, two tow ropes were attached to the jangada. All four jangadeiros rode on the jangada as it was towed out Guanabara Bay and past the spot chosen for the day's shooting, where the company had been waiting some time. There was a considerable mist, but the company on shore saw them pass and tried to signal them. Welles asked the two chauffeurs to drive down to the next point and see if they could tell them to return to the location.

'When the drivers arrived, they succeeded in getting the jangadeiros' attention. Jacare ordered the captain of the launch to come in closer and, in so doing, a tremendous breaker caught the launch and jangada, filling the launch with water which saved it from overturning. Both tow lines were broken and the jangada was freed and rolled over. Jeronimo and Jacare started to swim to the shore. Tata and Manoel Preto stayed close to the jangada and uprighted it. They heard Jacare call for help, but by the time they went to look for him he was gone.

'The two chauffeurs dived in the water. The jangada turned over a second time and threw the jangadeiros once more into the water. When they overturned again, the jangadeiros threw a rope to the chauffeurs, who helped them beach the jangada . . . Welles returned with the jangadeiros to the Fluminense Club . . .'

Thus it was not a second unit; Welles was waiting, himself. And, dramatic though the image is, Welles did not scrawl a dedication to the drowned man across his script, since there was no formalised script as such. The dedication may have been scrawled on that cuff off which the film was being shot.

Meanwhile, back at the studio . . . Charles is right—there were serious troubles there, but he has made the protagonists Breen and Koerner. They did indeed tilt and joust and Breen was unseated as production head by Koerner. However, in the real battle over control of the company, Floyd Odlum-Atlas Company vs. Chase Bank, *et al*, the two saddest casualties were protagonists George Schaefer and Welles. Both lost. It had a Greek classicism to it.

Schaefer, the President of RKO, was responsible for bringing Welles to Hollywood, and for the unique first contract which gave him so much freedom. Schaefer had managed to withstand considerable pressure when the Hearst and allied forces in publishing and film exhibition threatened him and the company over *Kane*. There was one part of the Board of Directors that had strongly advocated not releasing *Kane* at all. Schaefer fought that through. While he could never achieve a circuit booking, an absolute necessity to the commercial success of any film, he refused to abandon *Kane*. It was Schaefer who, after hearing the records of the Mercury's radio production of *The Magnificent Ambersons*, gave Orson the okay for that film. Then the Odlum-Koerner forces made Orson the rock on which they broke Schaefer. Schaefer in turn broke Welles.

The first serious skirmish lost by Welles was the non-fulfilment of the RKO promise to have Robert Wise bring the basic Welles' cut of *Ambersons* to Rio for further work. Before leaving for Rio, Welles had supervised editing of most of the film and left instructions for the remainder. Wise's presence with the film had been the agreed plan, therefore Charles' contention that Welles abandoned *Ambersons* is excruciatingly incorrect.

Bob was ready to leave for the airport with the film when the government put an embargo on non-military travel. That ended RKO's effort to fulfil the promise. The picture was cut with some necessarily inadequate cabled instructions from Orson. When preview reaction was adverse, Schaefer's fall was accelerated. Jack Moss, himself in a cruel squeeze, acted as best he could in Orson's behalf; but interpolated scenes created by committee, compromises between a thorough gutting by studio forces and a salvage operation by Welles' allies, particularly Moss and Joe Cotten, only resulted in a picture that caused Welles heartache.

* * *

In April, bills somehow weren't being paid in Rio for *It's All True*. Cables began to come asking for estimates for a given sequence, or for a week's shooting, or a day's. One early morning in mid-April, Orson and I were surprised by ads in the financial pages of the Rio morning papers which declared in beautiful Portuguese that RKO would no longer be responsible for debts incurred by Orson Welles or Richard Wilson. In ugly English, this meant we couldn't buy a roll of toilet tissue without an RKO okay. Orson's vigorous private protest direct to Schaefer went unheeded. From then on, to understate it, production was a bit sticky! Public notice of our plight, blown up into rumours of a total halt in production, aggravated by the clumsy cancelling of the nightclub finale number, took their toll. Making matters worse, the press got hold of information that Welles and I had found and witnessed a 'Macumba', the outlawed voodoo ceremony indigenous to the black culture; further, that we intended to touch on it in our filmed spectrum of the country and its music. This alarmed the Brazilian establishment, roughly equivalent then to its oppressive shape today.

The press and others in the power pyramid were indignant when Welles got to the nitty-gritty of the Samba story. Just as jazz came from brothels, back alleys, narrow streets of New Orleans, the Samba is literally born in the favelas of Rio, the picturesque but poverty-stricken shanties that cling to the steep hillsides surrounding Rio. When we actually did this vital sequence of the story, there was a tremendous hue and

The funeral: First the procession, with the biggest call possible of jangadeiros in fishing costume -- also women and children and very old men. The body carried in the hammock.

Question: Actual location near cemetery seems very photographic, but is it too pretty?

The cemetery: Scene in the actual cemetery with procession entering; others crowded outside the wall.

Burial and Last Rites: Grave and nearby graves dug somewhere else than in actual cemetery.

NOTE: (Find location for above)

Many close shots, individuals, two shots and three shots of the jangadeiros and other members of the community.

NOTE: (Find a segue for here --)

The men gather, the gathering becomes a meeting --

The Meeting: Discussions, then the decision to make the journey to Rio.

The departure: This sequence needs more thought.

The journey itself.

The arrival in Rio.

HOW DO WE PAY OFF?

The solution to most of this problem lies in writing the actual interview dialogue, but real visual, punch fade-out must be found.

BIGGEST UNSOLVED PROBLEM

Where does dialogue take place.

THE 'JANGADEIROS' STORY: A PAGE OF SCRIPT NOTES, OUTLINES AND QUERIES.

cry. Editorials asked why we couldn't simply photograph Sugar Loaf, the Christ of Corcovado, and the beautiful Cariocans—like everybody else who came there. Why, they clamoured for days, did we have to show those horrible slums which were going to be torn down in a year or two anyway? (The favelas are reportedly bigger and more crowded in 1970 than in 1942.)

Unbeknownst to Orson or myself, the Department of Turismo went to our Production Manager and asked him to 'lose' the film, or not to ship it. He agreed, because he resented Welles and distrusted the whole project. In particular he loathed the favela sequence, and we later learned that he had included in his production reports felicitous phrases like 'Welles shot nothing but niggers again today.'

A word here about this Production Manager, Lynn Shores. He was not our nemesis out of innate villainy, of course, but was representative of an interesting species worth many words in another context, loosely designated here as The Old Hollywood Hand, but recognised everywhere films are made. Then and today this type resists both youth and outsiders. For Lynn Shores, Orson was the enemy all rolled up in an outsized one. Nevertheless we managed to calm local fears and shake the film loose from his grasp.

Then the major sequence of the Carnival segment, its big Urca nightclub finale, had to be budgeted, argued, rebudgeted. It was cancelled, reinstated, modified, finally okayed by Schaefer.

Before that final okay was received, in order to record certain musicians who were leaving Brazil, but had already been contracted for and rehearsed, Orson signed contracts making himself personally liable for any money spent. Concurrently, I had to send a letter to Shores absolving RKO from any responsibility for commitments made by us. It was only by actions like this (self-penalising rather than self-

seeking) that the fabulous Urca sequence, unique in being an example of how Welles dealt with a popular musical production number, was put on film. That extraordinary eight minute sequence with afore-noted Paul Misraki arrangement—the only sequence of the film ever totally printed in colour, edited and considered complete—is just one of the sequences which, as Charles reports, may now be on the bottom of the Pacific Ocean.

On May 2nd, before we had begun filming that sequence (May 30th), Schaefer cabled Lynn Shores: 'ABANDON FOUR MEN ON RAFT FILM. CONTINUE TO COMPLETION CARNIVAL. MAKE NO COMMITMENTS . . . REISMAN COMING TO ACT FOR COMPANY.'

Phil Reisman, RKO Vice-President for Foreign Sales, arrived and delivered a long, bitter, castigating letter from Schaefer. Phil was at our side or on our backs from that day on. Reisman liked Orson, knew the country somewhat, and was susceptible to our argument that announcing abandonment of the Jangadeiro picture would be disastrous for RKO's image as well as for the Co-ordinators' whole programme in Brazil. He withdrew an absolute order that would have precluded Orson's developing the subject to be done in Fortaleza.

Meantime, he admittedly was searching feverishly for a formula to close down the picture and ship everybody home. By mid-May he was laying the groundwork for an explanation to the press, that Welles had to go back to Hollywood to work on the film already shot, and Welles and a smaller group would return to the north of Brazil soon afterwards. RKO, in his belief, would gamble that our failure to return could be explained in some ingenious way.

So filming of certain loosely scheduled shots of the four fishermen continued. Thus there were bitter ironies surrounding the tragedy of Jacare.

On May 13th we shot (in colour, as part of the Carnival footage) the four fishermen at the airport, acting out their farewell to Rio after experiencing Carnival. We saw them entering the plane which would take them back to Fortaleza in eight hours . . . eight hours to cover the same distance which their heroic odyssey by raft had taken two months to traverse. In one story structure these were to have been the final shots of the Brazilian segment.

May 14th: A.M. Shot Inserts and Pickups. P.M. Part of the Plaza Eleven sequence, the heart of our Carnival story. 1,000 feet of Technicolor film left.

May 15th: More Plaza Eleven shots. Ran out of film.

Being out of film was nothing new. This problem (and weather) plagued us throughout. Our irregular supplies of negative came in shipments of one to five thousand feet.

On May 16th, 17th: No shooting calls, since there was no film. Welles rehearsed singers and dancers for the Urca sequence, supervised pre-recordings, worked on the continuity for the Jangadeiro sequence. We still hoped to avoid the insult to the four national heroes and to Brazil that cancellation of that project would mean.

May 18th: No film, no call. By now the crew was understandably restless. In the afternoon, Welles gave one of his series of well-received weekly lectures. (Formal lectures, informal talks, interviews, radio broadcasts, were all parts of his extraordinarily successful cultural exchange programme, specifically requested by the Co-ordinators Office.)

That morning he had gone scouting a location for some shots which could be done in black and white, since Schaefer, after bitter argument, had decided for economy reasons that the *Four Men* story would not be in colour. So these shots were to be part of that theoretically abandoned saga, a vital part, their arrival in Rio Harbour, the master-shot of which Charles describes vividly and with moving enthusiasm.

On May 19th the Jacare tragedy occurred. The whole nation was grief-stricken. None more so than our company. It is not true, as Charles says, that we were unable to risk coming out of our hotel for days as a result of this accident. The press in article and editorial lamented his death, deeply

lamented that he had died for a 'fiction'—for the 'silver screen'—for a 'fantasy', as they said, but on the whole they did not blame us.

One result of Jacare's death was to stop the temporising on Reisman's part. He knew he could not summarily send us all home with some vague commitment to come back and finish the Jangadeiros story. In a series of meetings he imposed a solution that would keep RKO's hands clean and put the screws on us: 10,000 dollars was to be deposited in my name. A silent Mitchell camera, 40,000 feet of black and white film, and a young expatriate Hungarian cameraman, George Fanto, were to be furnished. The rigorous control took the form of reservations for four people, Welles, myself, my wife Elizabeth and Welles' secretary, Shifra, on a flight to the United States six weeks after the date of our arrival in Fortaleza. These transportation slots in wartime were priceless.

In Hollywood, Herb Drake, the Mercury's publicity chief, had already uncovered proof of a covert anti-Welles campaign. It was being leaked that *Ambersons* and *Journey into Fear* were 'disasters'; that the *It's All True* footage was impossible to 'put together' (a true statement only in the sense that sound and action rarely came into the United States together and, as no cutter was assigned to it, could never be matched. All the footage, in fact, had to await Welles' supervision and be related to Welles' evolving story line; again, one of the understandings at the outset). And, finally, that Welles was loafing, dragging the project out, draft-dodging and spending money like water.

RKO never told the press, for instance that we had waited over a month after Carnival for equipment to arrive by boat! That even with the Brazilian government's intercession, it took an additional two weeks to get the equipment through



RIGHT, ABOVE: WELLES PLANNING A SET-UP FOR THE JANGADEIRO SEQUENCE NEAR FORTALEZA. THE CAMERAMAN GEORGE FANTO IS ON THE EXTREME LEFT.
RIGHT: THE FOUR JANGADEIROS (JACARE IN DARKER HAT) ARE INTRODUCED INTO THE SETTING OF CARNIVAL.

customs. That without lighting equipment we couldn't re-stage any night material (when most Carnival action really happens) or set up any cover sets to protect us from the weather. No announcement was made to anyone that we'd run out of colour film on May 15th and that it was 5 p.m. on May 29th—fourteen days later—that one 2,000 foot can of colour negative arrived—or that the few remaining black and white shots were impossible without Jacare. Not that Welles was idle, even then. The Urca sequences demanded rehearsals and pre-recordings; and he continued to function as the U.S.A.'s most effective cultural ambassador to date.

Mainly, however, night and day, we re-worked our continuities for the whole *It's All True* film, and made adjustments necessary now that Jacare was gone. A new complete story line for the *Carnival* subject was sent as part of a report to give our side of the project's history. In it we reminded everyone that there had never been a formal budget because there had never been a script on which to base it. Everyone had understood this, and, indeed, had accepted Welles' estimate that the picture would cost between 850,000 and a million dollars. This comprehensive forty-seven page document was an answer to Schaefer's bitter letter. Copies were sent to Rockefeller and Whitney.

On May 30th shooting of the big Urca sequence was finally started. My log for Sunday, June 7th, includes:

11.30 P.M.—5.00 A.M. Municipal Theatre steps Exterior. Policeman and child dialogue scene Technicolor.

This scene, differing somewhat from Charles' description, showed the lost child who had been featured throughout, now alone and asleep against the lamp-post, surrounded by mounds of confetti and the debris of revelry in empty streets stretching for blocks. Dawn is breaking. As distant figures of street sweepers appear with their brooms, a policeman tenderly

picks up the sleeping boy, asks his name and where he lives. The boy's answer is a sleepy murmur of his favourite Samba, featured throughout. Their walk away is intercut with Otello (the other star character) saying farewell to Plaza Eleven as that song, also featured, plays like an echo. The lamp above the street sign goes out. Silence. *Carnival* and its film are over.

On June 8th the filming of *Carnival* was finished. In a matter of hours everyone and all the equipment was gone.

By June 13th our little group was in Fortaleza, two thousand miles away, near the mouth of the Amazon. But our equipment arrived a whole precious week after we did, and our camera was without the lens that everyone knew Welles used most.

We worked from before dawn to after darkness fell for some six weeks.

Welles in a letter of thanks to Assis Figueiredo, the Turismo chief, for the cooperation in Rio, also said: '... the material is perfectly magnificent. From the point of view of the camera, the combination of the country, and the people and their achievement offers, I think, an opportunity unique in documentary films.' We thought we had extraordinary film. We never found out! The studio could never seem to find it. What they found they didn't even bother to print. The film that Higham calls Jangadeiro film, shot in and around Rio, was mainly transition material linking the *Carnival* subject to the sequence in the north.

We had shot our full 40,000 feet. We filmed the raft putting into port at Recife and Bahia, as the Jangadeiros had done in their original trip. The last of our ten thousand dollars was used to get us from Bahia to Belem in order to use our precious tickets home, which we managed on time.

A month later in Hollywood, prodded by my urging, the studio miraculously turned up thirteen hundred feet of the film and printed it. It was mainly camera test material and early work. To the best of my knowledge, for all the extraordinary cinematic effort Welles put into covering that subject, for all our dawn to dusk labours, that thirteen hundred feet was all that was ever printed. So a lot of exposed but never-developed negative also may be on the sea floor... if it wasn't reclaimed for silver years before.

Instead of keeping those Welles myths afloat, Charles might have noted about this proposed million dollar project: At the end of June, with *all* the filming completed on *Carnival*, the main subject; with most of the *Bonito* segment shot; with the full 10,000 dollar budget included for the then shooting *Jangadeiro* sequence, the total money spent was 531,910 dollars. RKO added to this an *overhead* charge of 27½ per cent, or 146,275 dollars, making a total of 678,185 for a picture cancelled on the grounds of Welles' reckless extravagance.

Perhaps we should have guessed what was going to happen to *It's All True*, the film child delivered with such love and pain. We had a sign... At the height of our Rio miseries, after falling into disfavour with the press over shooting the favelas, after the Urca had been cancelled a second time, after Reisman had been sent to take the picture over 'for the company', after the death of Jacare, I had a strange visit. The leaders of the Macumba group arrived in my office. They wanted to know when we were going to film them, as we'd agreed. Their new white robes were ready, and they had cost two hundred dollars. With Reisman on our necks, filming them was out of the question. Even the production's paying for their new white robes was impossible. I was trying to explain our plight gently, and negotiate a price for the new robes which Welles could pay personally, when I was called to the 'phone in the next room.

When I came back the 'Macumbistas' were gone. Stuck in the hard cover of my script, around the title of *It's All True*, was a little ring of needles.

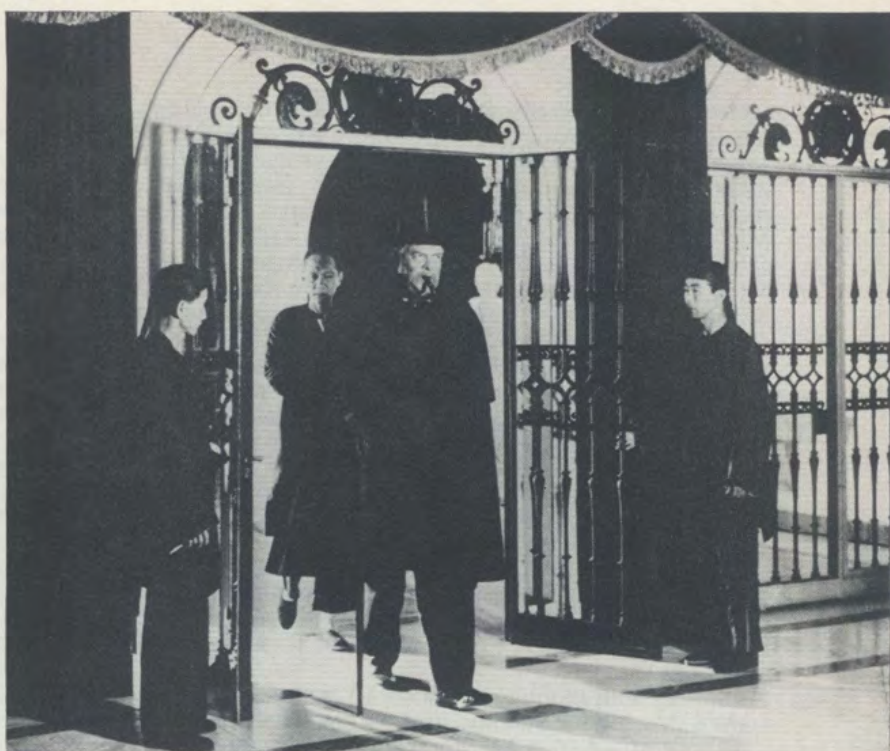
I'll close now. More another time. Regards to Penelope.

Best,
DICK

LEFT, ABOVE: AT THE URCA CASINO, WELLES, DR. FIGUEIREDO, RICHARD WILSON.

LEFT: "THE U.S.A.'S MOST EFFECTIVE CULTURAL AMBASSADOR", WELLES ENGAGED ON AN INTER-CONTINENTAL RADIO BROADCAST, WHICH HE ALSO WROTE AND PRODUCED.





WELLES' IMMORTAL STORY

Joseph McBride

There but for the grace of God, goes God.

Description of Welles
by Herman J. Mankiewicz

A GENERATION AGO, in *The Lady from Shanghai*, Orson Welles (in the guise of a young sailor) told us that Macao was the wickedest city in the world. He said it with bravado, hoping to impress the young lady who would later try to destroy him. Welles made sport of a naïve young man's deadly tendency to be siphoned on to the most malign of characters—a descent into the maelstrom. The powers of evil, the lawyer, his wife and his partner, set up a drama to ensnare the young sailor. In *The Immortal Story*, Welles uses this episode as the basis of a philosophical inquisition. His source, Isak Dinesen's novella, reads like a précis of his themes, and he follows it quite closely, shading in his own rhythms and overtones. Its hero, Mr. Clay, a moribund and fabulously wealthy Macao merchant, wants to prove his power by making the archetypal sailor's story—the tale of a rich old man who hired a young sailor to impregnate his wife—pass from legend into fact. 'I don't like pretence,' he muses. 'I don't like prophecies. I like facts. . . People should only record things which have already happened.'

The Lady from Shanghai is packed with bewildering action; almost nothing happens in *The Immortal Story*. But for a short chorus of merchants in an early scene and the handful of Chinese who pass through as mute witnesses, the only people in the film are the four principals: Clay, his clerk Levinsky, the young sailor, and Virginie, the woman Levinsky hires to play the part of Clay's wife. A courtyard, two sparse rooms, and Clay's mansion form the whole of the setting, and two tattered sails in the foreground of the opening shot suffice to

indicate the existence of the outside world. This is an interior drama, a meditation. The old man is disconcerted when he finds that all three of his puppets also know the sailor's story: this is an omen, a definition of the forces he will have to overstep to carry out his will. He continues undaunted, bursting into the bedchamber, unable to conceal his passion: 'Because you move without pain, you think you move at your own will. Not so—you move at my bidding. Two young, strong and lusty jumping-jacks in this old hand of mine!'

Welles is, as he has said, primarily a man of ideas, and each of his films is to some extent a philosophical drama. *The Immortal Story* is the most theatrical work in his career. The stage is simple and bare, the props are laid out for our inspection, the issues are stated and reiterated in different keys, and the characters are aware of their roles. A further peculiarity: *The Immortal Story* is a miniature, scarcely an hour long, and it is Welles's first film in colour since *It's All True*. The colour is soft and dream-like, recalling Fellini's statement that colour in movies is 'like breathing underwater' because 'cinema is movement; colour is immobility.' *The Immortal Story* is a drama of ideas, linear and intellectually direct. But it is emotionally mysterious, developing a tension between immobility and purpose.

Citizen Kane is about mystery, certainly, but the mystery of fact. With its maze-like system of cross-references, it strikes me as essentially evasive, centrifugal (which is not to judge it, only to explain it). Welles assembles all the facts, disproves all of them, and declares his unwillingness to define the hero. We are made to understand the meaning of legend and to wonder at the meaning of fact. We see, hear and feel much about Kane

ABOVE: "THE IMMORTAL STORY", JEANNE MOREAU, NORMAN ESHLEY, ORSON WELLES.

(much more than about Mr. Clay), but we know that we do not understand him. *The Immortal Story* approaches legend from the inside out. It is centripetal—*Kane* in negative.

But because the making of legend is itself a subjective process, its meaning determined in the mind of its beholder, *The Immortal Story* seems to me to strike into the heart of the matter. What it eschews in breadth it gains in lucidity. It omits all that is peripheral to Clay, and defines him as the doer of an essential deed, which in one stroke ennoble him and renders meaningless his prior existence. This is Welles's *Tempest*. We are taken directly into the mind of the creator, and leave our spectators' seats to witness the pulling of the strings above the stage. Clay's musings coincide with the flow of the author's reasoning; when the mechanics of the story have been set completely in motion, Clay dies and the author withdraws after allowing Levinsky to make a final statement of the theme. The screen dissolves to white; darkness would be inappropriate to our lucidity.

* * *

In the late work of great directors, the youthful delight in flaunting one's tools and one's splendid flashes of insight gives way to a clear-eyed simplicity which the immature and insecure can easily mistake for senile fixation. Renoir gives us *Le Déjeuner sur l'Herbe*, Ford *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*, Lubitsch *Heaven Can Wait*, Hawks *El Dorado*, Dreyer *Gertrud*, Welles *The Immortal Story*. If it comes to Clay in his last moments to dare the impossible—if it comes to Welles to eschew camera movements and bizarre perspectives—it is because he has seen everything happen. As Clay eats a solitary dinner, his face reflected in a last, nostalgic, melancholy series of mirrors, Welles tells us, 'It was only natural that things should be as they were, because he had willed them to be so.' And yet there is something Clay has not touched, cannot touch, something his machinations call up and cannot dispel.

In the extraordinary erotic scenes which lie at the core of the film, Welles shifts suddenly, breathtakingly, to the rapturous intimacy of a hand-held camera as Virginie drifts naked through the bedchamber blowing out the candles in grave preparation for love-making (recapturing a scene from *The Scarlet Empress*, one of the many echoes of Sternberg in this delicately masochistic film). The young sailor enters to find her lying nude in the bed, her arms crossed over her breasts as if in mingled shame and self-protection, and during his undressing Welles gives us magnificent close-ups of her face, her mouth, her eyes. Despite the frank surrender of Elsa in *The Lady from Shanghai*, there was no nudity, no overt eroticism in that strangely chaste film. But here the tentative, spontaneous attraction between the two is an assertion of defiant tenderness, a mockery of Clay's massive, rotting flesh. No Welles hero, not even Quinlan or Falstaff, is closer to decay than this bitter old man.

In his last two films, *Chimes at Midnight* and this, Welles has moved ever closer to the faces of his characters. It is a hard-won conclusion. Earlier in his career, he had avoided, almost feared, close-ups, preferring the distancing of rhetoric and the qualification of irony. The faces were masks, and the cool baroque style reflected the desperation of his characters' self-deception. Mr. Arkadin is the apogee of this tendency; from that point on, his characters have been increasingly willing to admit their duplicity. In *The Immortal Story*, everything happens in the glances passed from one person to another, and in their echoes on the face of the hero.

Welles has come full circle from the reporter's futile investigation in *Kane*; the story has worked its way back to its source, the story-teller and his audience. In *The Trial*, K. found it 'a miserable conclusion' that lying should be regarded as a universal principle; Clay, like Falstaff, devotes himself to turning lying into truth. Why then does he die when his drama is consummated? He doesn't die in the book. The book's sailor entrusts Levinsky with a precious shell as a parting gift to Virginie; Welles has the sailor give it to Clay himself for deliverance to her, and a sudden close-up of the shell rocking back and forth on the floor of the verandah where Clay sits shows us that the old man has died. Welles is not, like Chaplin,

a solipsist, though his heroes are. At their deaths, the world flies apart from its bearings—signified usually by the wrenching of chronology and by the grandiosity of their death scenes—but Welles's style gives an ironic qualification to their solipsism. The unfortunate Othello and Arkadin commit suicide, but no Welles hero offers himself up as a martyr, as Chaplin does in *Monsieur Verdoux*. The Welles hero dies fighting, and if he takes the world with him at the end, the act makes clear the presumption implicit in his defiance. Welles is a tragedian. He squares his accounts with the world.

* * *

The Immortal Story differs from previous Welles films in that its prologue—usually his instrument for invoking a prescience of death—concerns itself with *past*, not future, destruction. A chorus of three merchants, lesser Clays (an invention of Welles's), discuss briefly and pointedly the circumstances under which Clay drove his partner (Virginie's father) to suicide and took over his mansion. Welles's earlier heroes looked to the past for the comforting, if illusory, memories of innocence; Clay reveres the past, but only because it confirms his present position. He has Levinsky read his old account books to him, and scorns the prophecy of Isaiah ('... in the wilderness shall waters break out') that Levinsky carries with him. Innocence, desire and fecundity have no value for him. He contrasts the sailor's ideals with the solidity of gold: 'He's young. Eh, Levinsky? He's full of the juices of life. He has blood in him. I suppose he's got tears. He longs, yearns for the things which dissolve people—for friendship, for love. . . And gold, my young sailor, is solid, it's hard, it's proof against dissolution.'

His realisation of the sailor's story is a gesture of contempt towards prophecy, an attempt to turn possibility into the *passé*, but both Levinsky and Virginie prophesy several times that Clay's latest venture will be the cause of his death. Clay believes that it is the future which is dangerous, because it means death; but it is finally the machinery of the past, the sum of his delusions, which leads him to destruction.

The past tense of the prologue warns us that the story will not so much concern a hero's attempts to recapture the past as his attempts to escape it. But where can he escape? The glass ball at the beginning of *Kane*, like the prologue to *The Magnificent Ambersons*, summons up feelings of mystery and romance. The merchants' grim analysis in *The Immortal Story* leaves us in desolation, and it is only at the end that Welles invokes possibility—in the shell, which gives out the sound of the sea, a message from another world. Thus the typical pattern of a Welles film is exactly reversed, and the dropping of the shell has a meaning quite unlike the dropping of the glass ball. When Kane dies, our feeling is of awe and excitement, and the shattering of the ball is thrilling—we share the grandeur of Kane's release. It is only subsequently that we are made aware of the feelings of loss and futility associated with the ball. By the time that Clay drops the shell, however, we have faced the fact that he has obliterated all the alternatives to the bleakness of self-serving. Then, when we see the noiselessly swaying, mute shell (we do not see it drop), we realise suddenly, with great force and compression, that there has always been an alternative—the liberating voice of mystery unheeded. The sensation of discovery coincides with the moment of destruction.

Clay dies because his ego, his consciousness, has overwhelmed him. Virginie looks quietly away as Levinsky pronounces his master's epitaph: 'It's very hard on people who want things so badly that they can't do without them. If they can't get these things, it's hard. And when they do get them, surely it is very hard.' He puts the shell to his ear and listens to the echo of some long-vanished wave. 'I have heard it before, long ago, but where?' The *futility* of Kane's life is epitomised by the burning of the sled at the end of the film; forgotten *possibility* is Clay's final perception. Half a lifetime lies between the meticulous qualification of *Citizen Kane* and the impassioned simplicity of *The Immortal Story*. The inversion of the emphasis reminds us that Welles's deepest concerns are not with failure but with potentiality.

RES

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Jean-Louis Trintignant in Bernardo Bertolucci's
 new film about a pre-war Fascist assassin,
 from the novel by Alberto Moravia.
 Stefania Sandrelli (right, and
 far right) plays
 his wife.

THE CONFORMIST



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DateLine: Trieste/Café Royal/Melton Hall



Death in Venice

DIRK BOGARDE calculated that he had reached his two hundred and forty-third 'look' and the end of his tether. Almost. Working for Luchino Visconti on Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice* was an experience, alternately exalting and exasperating. Visconti—Duke of Modrone and descendant of Charlemagne—is the absolute monarch, tyrant and charmer, hawk and dove. The camera and consequently Visconti seemed pleased with the 'looks', thought Bogarde, relieved. 'Three months from now I shall know it has been marvellously worthwhile. But just at present it is too tender to contemplate. Like going to the dentist and having all your bridge-work done in one go.'

He considered Visconti—'V', the 'monster' or the 'master', depending on the prevailing wind—was not unlike Losey, in the way each composed their films in many-layered depth. Also there was the total application to the needs of the production, which placed punishing demands on those who have to supply the needs. 'Though Losey is more professional, more aware of working within the film industry set-up. Visconti is a brilliant amateur in the best, truest sense. Very aristocratic, very rich, very talented—the coincidence of all three has conditioned how he works.'

We were in Trieste on the tag-end of the marathon which had begun at the Hotel des Bains on the Lido, where Mann set his story; moved into Venice, a nervous nose ahead of the tourist season; and fetched up at Cinecittà in Rome. A decaying railway terminal at Trieste had been found to substitute for the station (circa 1911) at Venice which had inconsiderately modernised itself. The location scouts were off in the hills talent-spotting good-looking graveyards. That would be it. Tempers had stopped fraying. The End was in sight.

The day before shooting at the station was a holiday, which meant that everyone went around with a twitch of conscience for being so idle, although Visconti himself had decreed it. No one felt quite content until he arrived from Venice with his entourage, a new crew-cut and a brave, checkered umbrella that did duty for a sunshade. One can see why his crew drop everything to work with him when he calls; why his rages, which can immobilise a set and everyone on it, are instantly forgiven and forgotten. He gives his unit from the star down an exhilarating sense of pride. 'These days he is a lamb,' says Piero Tosi, the costume designer who has been with him since *Senso*, 'then he was a tiger.'

At dinner that night he was expansive and happy. All was well. Bogarde was a loved son. He led his film 'family' into the tough little Trieste restaurant where the food had to be superb and traditional and the staff buzzed around him, not deferentially, but like respectful accomplices in an elaborate conspiracy. He was an immaculate host. One must try the special bean soup, the local cheese, the private wine.

Characteristically, he had spent the afternoon at the castle of the Hapsburg Archduke Maximilian and his wife Carlotta at Miramare. Just looking and feeling and absorbing the atmosphere. Someone suggested, not entirely in jest, that he had probably lugged the unit out to Trieste just to have an excuse for visiting Miramare. He thinks the real Hapsburg story would make a splendid film: the others had been 'fairy tales'. Romantically wrong.

The prospect of *Nicholas and Alexandra* intrigued him: 'but you can only make it in Leningrad, nowhere else.' He finds the critics tiresome at times. 'They will always connect each of my films with all the others—the link—the family. Particularly the Americans do this. I don't see the point. A compliment? Maybe. But I could wish they would pay me a greater compliment. To judge each film as it comes.'

'What is past is past,' he says with the urgency of a man whose next film—a Proust adaptation—may be his last. 'I see only the faults in my old films. The other day I saw *La Terra Trema*. I thought the audience would walk out. How can they stand it? Though I wish very much I could have completed it in the three episodes I planned instead of just one. Oh yes. But the time is past. The time for *La Terra Trema* is past.'

Death in Venice, like all his film projects, has been maturing in his mind for many years. But the plans for actually making it crystallised during *The Damned*. Bogarde's first indication of it was when he told Visconti he would rather be the character named Aschenbach (played by Helmut Griem) instead of Friedrich Bruckmann—the 'Macbeth' of *The Damned*—which many critics now agree was a monumental piece of miscasting. Visconti was adamant that he should be Friedrich, adding, according to Bogarde, 'but you may play Aschenbach in my next film, *Death in Venice*.'

He later justified his choice of Bogarde to the baffled front office at Warner Brothers by explaining that, 'Bogarde is like a dead pheasant, which you hang from the neck and when the head falls the body is ripe. Bogarde is exactly ripe

for this role.' Bogarde related the story with some relish. Later on the set, when Visconti remarked that he was looking a trifle 'old', he retorted that you could hardly expect anything else from a dead pheasant.

The front office, apparently, was also concerned about the theme of Mann's novella. Anyone who had merely read a synopsis instead of the original might reasonably suppose that the film would be simply about an elderly man who chases a young boy and then dies. 'It is not about homosexuality,' Visconti insisted. All the same, it was thought, why not change the boy to a girl: instead of a lecherous old man pursuing a little boy, a lecherous old man pursuing a little girl. Reason, it appears, prevailed.

It is easy to see why the book should be such a coveted film property. It has the formidable pure classic line that challenges a director's skill and vision. If he fails to measure up, he can expect no mercy. Conscious perhaps of his own failure with Camus' *L'Etranger*, Visconti started the film as some kind of sacred mission. 'If it is no good, neither of us can work in the cinema again,' he assured Bogarde. Somewhat extravagantly, considering he is now planning the Proust film.

To emphasise what he feels is the essence of the story, he has introduced a dialogue between Schönberg and Gustav Mahler—upon whom Mann based the character of Aschenbach—taken from letters they exchanged which discuss the nature of perfect beauty. Mahler-Aschenbach believes beauty is created by the artist and is disproved when he discovers perfect natural beauty in the Polish boy Tadzio.

Visconti, however, has little respect for the cadence of dialogue—strangely for an artist whose reputation as a musician and producer of opera would suggest a hypersensitive feeling for the rhythm of sound. He seems to share an impatience with mere words with Hitchcock and Ford, whom James Stewart recalls ripping out entire pages of dialogue no matter how relevant just because the chat slowed up the visuals.

The script of *Death in Venice*, which he has written with Nicola Badalucco, is a pictorial poem. The lighting cameraman Pasquale De Santis has washed the film in those pale mists of Venice in which mirages take shape. There were problems at first. 'Mahler' had to become 'Thomas Mann', though Bogarde's fears that he might materialise as 'Mr. Chips' or 'Rudyard Kipling' were fortunately unfounded. The specially constructed Mahler nose make-up had a distressing habit of blowing up in the heat. Oddly, Visconti, who can hold up a morning's shooting arranging the precise fold of an extra's veil which may just get into shot but probably won't, was less perturbed than Bogarde, who for the past three months had been thinking in terms of Mahler, since the memorable night in Rome before

LEFT: "DEATH IN VENICE". TOP: BOGARDE AND VISCONTI AT THE TRIESTE STATION. SILVANA MANGANO AND BJORN ANDRESEN. BELOW: AT THE HOTEL DES BAINS.

production started when Visconti, with a showman's feel for the significant gesture, clued the actor into the composer. Actors wait on Visconti's clues, I find, like columnists panting for the latest crumb about Princess Anne. It is all they can expect. As Alain Delon, who worked for Visconti on *Rocco and his Brothers* and *The Leopard* and will play Proust in his next film, explained: 'If he picks you, it's because you have what he wants in the role. He knows what he's getting, even though you may not know. He only tells you when you're wrong.'

The search for the ideal Tadzio (which had defeated other directors) ended with Bjorn Andresen, who is Swedish, fifteen years old and would rather spend his life playing an electric guitar. At the introductory press reception he mistook Bogarde for the film publicist and the film publicist for Aschenbach. He doesn't fancy acting. But he looks superb, takes direction beautifully and everyone agreed he was a nice, sensible lad to have around. His mother is played by Silvana Mangano, who is doing the film pretty much for love of the book and Visconti.

What is surprising about Visconti is the blend of extreme perfectionist who plans and prepares endlessly (which I had expected) and spontaneous creator (which I had not expected). 'He has,' said one observer, 'a genius for making use of God's gifts.' In one of the film's family groups in the salon of the Hotel des Bains was the once famous lieder singer Masha Predit. On the spur of the moment and for the most crucial scene in the film (the death scene on the beach), Visconti recruited her to croon a Mussorgsky lament, serenely seated in a basket-chair, as Aschenbach dies. It is a stunning inspiration and, according to those who witnessed it, incomparably beautiful. Another inspiration—Aschenbach walking idly along the beach picking up a dead crab—Visconti reluctantly discarded because it didn't fit. 'It was very nice, but unnecessary.'

At the same time he will insist meticulously on pre-First World War costumes that are not only authentic in design but actual clothes of the period. It goes without saying that he and Tosi know two old women in Rome who have collections of wardrobes worn and discarded by Edwardian aristocracy. Bogarde's raw silk summer suit, for instance, was made in 1911. The women's linen garments were unpressed, because then linen was soft, creased and flowing instead of stiff, ironed and tailored.

Aschenbach's trunk, which was not opened in a particular scene, nevertheless had to be packed with all the clothes he would wear at the Hotel des Bains. Four filming hours were spent waiting for an exact Edwardian black wood photograph frame to be found in the curio shops of Rome. The equally authentic filigree silver and gold frames submitted him would not, he considered, be proper for Aschenbach. At the station ticket

office in Trieste (alias Venice), one of the crowd artists produced two modern pfennigs for a 1911 ticket to Vienna. The audience won't even see the error, let alone notice it, but Visconti insisted on another take using the correct fare.

He peppers his scenes with his very particular touches. Among the internationally mixed family parties at the hotel, the Russians are always roaring with laughter. 'Because,' said Visconti brooking no argument, 'it was before the First World War.' They also wear clothes ten years out of date. 'The Russians,' he adds with, one suspects, a disdain worthy of the Hapsburgs, 'were always ten years behind the fashion.' Commenting on an hourglass he'd chosen for one scene, he observed that 'there was one just like it in my father's house.' The sense one gets of sharing his life with his films is very strong in this one. In 1911, after all, he was a clever, cultivated child seeing all and noting everything.

In the Trieste railway station, partially bombed in the Second World War but still sporting the elegant roof which had attracted Visconti, the extras were

losing their false moustaches in the heat and Bogarde was trying not to get involved in the argument about whether the Venetian railway tickets should be white cardboard or a green screed. One wouldn't fancy being the fool who had overlooked that item of research. Tosi was inspecting Edwardian wrists for Common Market watches, and the cream serge and black doeskin and cotton dusters swept the platform grandly. One by one the extras were called to the booking hall where Visconti brooded over their placing in his scheme of the scene. Visconti, they said in hushed whispers, was choreographing his ballet.

That *Death in Venice* even reached the stage of being filmed more or less as written is a battle won by Visconti over José Ferrer, Huston, Losey, Zeffirelli, Resnais and all the other directors who have wanted to make it and for various reasons couldn't. It now remains to be seen whether he has consolidated that victory where it matters. On the screen.

MARGARET HINXMAN

Bloody Sunday

FOR A FILM which is about, in the words of its director, 'whether half a loaf really is better than no bread,' the extravagance of the ballroom at the Café Royal might seem a rather unlikely location, especially when laid out for a particularly ostentatious banquet. However, there is a point to be made. Peter Finch, as one of the characters faced with the question about half a loaf (or rather less than half the affections of Murray Head, playing a young designer having simultaneous affairs with Finch and Glenda Jackson), here comes face to face with another issue in his life. He is Jewish, and a doctor. He has, as a rule, very little to do with his family or organised Jewry, but on this occasion he has felt himself obliged to plunge back into the midst of it for his nephew's barmitzvah. It is a tiresome occasion for him, full of forced jollity and coy questions about why he has remained unmarried for so long: it confronts him with an aspect of his life he has chosen to leave out of consideration, and on the whole it confirms his feeling that he was right to do so.

No guilt: it is the key to the film's subject matter. Though the background might suggest swinging London, yet again, John Schlesinger is emphatic that his new film is about anything but that. It is in fact designed almost as an anti-swinging London film, a dogged attempt to insist that life and life's decisions are never easy, and least of all when merely modish solutions seem to be ready at hand. Bob, the young artist, is the

nearest of the three principals to a free soul, 1970s style: he is genuinely fond of both his lovers, within certain limits, but he puts his own life, his own career, his own comfort first. He feels no guilt, because no sense of duty towards either; the relationships work as long as they do work, and if they stop working the best thing is just to walk away. The other two characters have to come to terms with this as best they may: to decide whether love on these terms is love enough, or whether loneliness and nothing would be more secure in the long run.

The idea of the film has been with Schlesinger for a long time. Something first began to come of it when Penelope Gilliatt visited the location of *Far from the Madding Crowd* and mentioned that she would like to work on a film. Schlesinger told her his idea, and she went away and thought about it. The result was the original screenplay of *Bloody Sunday*.

'The one thing I didn't want to make,' says Schlesinger, 'was a problem film. This had to be a story of relationships, in which the characters are complex people in a difficult emotional situation. "Problems" would have detracted from their status as individuals. For instance, the character Peter Finch plays is, among other things, a doctor, Jewish, and homosexual. All these elements contribute to his character and his attitude towards the particular emotional situation in which he finds himself. But he does not have any hang-up specifically about being homosexual or being Jewish:

in these respects he has taken his decisions, he is very well adjusted. He is not a walking problem, he is a person. The same with Glenda Jackson: her character is less well adjusted to her situation, and therefore less able, or less willing, to settle for anything less than the largest possible commitment from the young man. But at least she too has no sense of guilt about the relationship.'

As a piece of shooting, at least, *Bloody Sunday* sounds relatively straightforward. But by the time I visited it just about everything conceivable had gone wrong, from the illness of Ian Bannen, which forced him out of the film after some weeks' shooting (to be replaced by Peter Finch, who had just seen the picture he was preparing for collapse in front of him), to a crane which had snapped neatly in two a day or so earlier and nearly killed the cameraman on it. Despite which, everyone seemed to be in reasonably good spirits during the complicated and uncomfortable business of setting up and shooting various incidents at the dinner and covering the background of vulgar revelry. Peter Finch in particular was clearly delighted with his role, and the unexpected chance to work with Schlesinger again.

Everyone to whom he talked about his role immediately brought up Oscar Wilde, he said. 'But actually, if you look at it, this is the opposite of Wilde. Wilde's homosexuality was, at least at the period covered by the film, the central fact of his life. He felt tremendous guilt about it, as well as a sort of suicidal exhibitionism. In *Bloody Sunday* I play a man with certain emotional problems which have nothing essentially to do with the sex of the person he is involved with. It might just as easily be a girl, but it happens to be a boy. This is the first script I have ever seen in which homosexuality is just a fact about a character, not presented at all as an issue in itself. He is a person who reacts in a certain way, and that's all there is to it. I like that.'

One of the complicating factors in acting in this film might be, I thought, that two of the principals, Peter Finch and Glenda Jackson, though perfectly aware of each other's existence, live in different spheres of the third character's life and meet only once in the whole story. But no, apparently not. 'Luckily perhaps, I didn't know Glenda Jackson at all, I'd never worked with her. And John rather ingeniously kept it that way: we never filmed on the same day, we never met at all except for a quick formal handshake until we met in the film. Each of us relates to the boy without reference to the relationship the other has with him; the whole situation has been in existence for a year or so when the film starts, so there are no revelations, no confrontations, no dramatic turns of fate. We go on living while time and circumstance settle things for us. There's hardly any plot, it's all character. Such a relief to have room to move around in a role, instead of being manoeuvred this way



"BLOODY SUNDAY": PETER FINCH AND NIKE ARRIGHI.

and that because the plot demands it.'

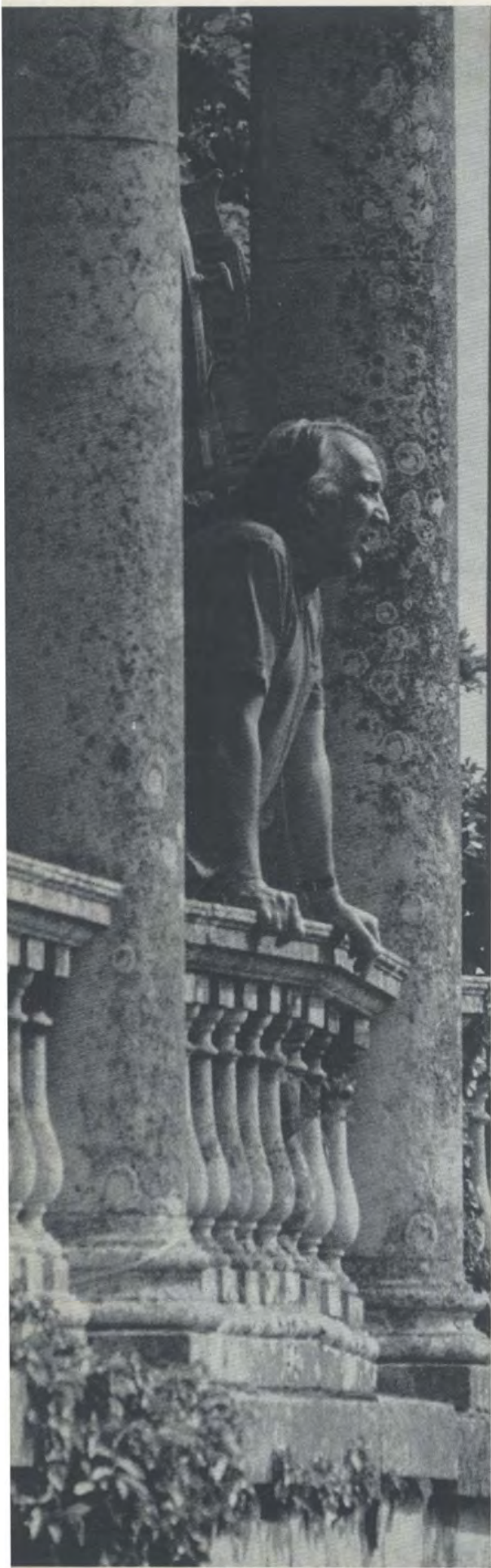
The one mystery about the film is how Schlesinger persuaded United Artists to back it, since the cast and the subject are hardly obvious box-office and with its fairly lengthy shooting schedule it is no low-budget quicky. Schlesinger himself is vague but pleased. 'I think they are finally coming round in Hollywood to the idea that they don't know what is commercial and what isn't, because nobody knows. They didn't like the idea of *Midnight Cowboy* particularly, but they let us do it and it has had quite a

success. So I suppose they thought that perhaps we could do it again. The only trouble now is that hardly a week goes by but that some sort of award for *Midnight Cowboy* comes in from somewhere. I'm paranoiac enough when filming anyway, but this is really so much to live up to. I thank heaven that I have already nearly finished another film, and have a third (*Hadrian VII*) already lined up. Otherwise, I think I'd be so intimidated I might just run away and never come back.'

JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR

"BLOODY SUNDAY": JOHN SCHLESINGER REHEARSES A SCENE WITH GLENDA JACKSON AND MURRAY HEAD.





The Go-Between

TO BEGIN WITH, it was too small to figure on any road map I could find. True, Norfolk offered a selection of Meltons, greater and lesser, but Melton Constable proved to be the other side of Norwich from the principal clutch of them—some twenty miles north, in that mysterious hinterland where the railway has never penetrated and once stately homes, too remote even for generously endowed American institutions to see them as possible footholds in Britain, tend to dream into slow decay amid the grain-heavy summer fields. One such is Melton Hall. Built in the 1660s, illustrated by Pevsner, and with some fantastic 17th century ceilings praised by one authority as 'a *ne plus ultra* in plasterer's artistry', it has been deserted now for seven years, the property of a farmer who lives elsewhere and devotes some energy to discouraging visitors.

Despite which, he proved willing enough to hand it all over to Joseph Losey and his unit for the shooting of *The Go-Between*. Apparently the house L. P. Hartley had principally in mind when writing his novel was Bradenham, home of the Rider Haggards, but according to Carmen Dillon, art director on *The Go-Between*, 'that was impossible: hideously tarted-up.' What the film needed was a rambling country house which would look as though nothing had been changed for years before the high Edwardian summer in which the action takes place. Melton, with its overgrown gardens and external air of unkempt splendour, filled the bill perfectly—especially since the interior was stripped and partly ruinous, leaving Carmen Dillon free to redecorate and furnish according to the needs of the film.

Following Losey's recent practice to the extreme, the whole film will be shot in and around Melton Hall. The day I was there the weather actually approximated to the ideal—or one of the ideals, since Hartley's story of fated adult passion seen or partly seen through a child's eyes requires still, baking summer heat for most of the time and lashing thundery rain for the climax. They were shooting in and from a small upstairs room which had been done out as a dainty Edwardian sitting-room. Across the lawn Michael Gough could be glimpsed talking to a gardener, while a little farther away some deer had obligingly stationed themselves to complete the decorative background.

Inside the room Julie Christie talks to the boy who is acting as go-between in her secret romance with Alan Bates, the neighbouring tenant farmer. The room is tiny—at any rate when occupied

by camera and crew as well as the actors—and stifling. In consequence everyone not vitally concerned with the immediate work in hand is banished, and we creep like ghosts around the echoing halls, trying in elaborate dumbshow not to creak boards or fall foul of crumbling plaster.

'Of course,' observes Carmen Dillon *sotto voce*, 'I think it's a hideous house. But the rather elaborate vulgarity of the style is just right for the story. As you can see'—indicating the cluttered drawing-room next to a darkly splendid dining-room where the mouldering remains of a large birthday tea are being scrupulously preserved—'we've kept the colour to an absolute minimum: nearly all in the fawn-brown-grey range, so that it makes a neutral background for the characters.' I recall that Losey and she were out to get the same sort of colourless colour effect in *Accident*. 'Yes—but all the interiors there were shot in the studio. Though funnily enough people often remark on the feeling of immediacy the film had from being made entirely on location!'

Do I gather that Miss Dillon is not entirely sold on the superiority of all-location shooting? 'I don't think it makes as much difference as everyone thinks. Or it needn't, particularly when you have a first-rate lighting cameraman like Gerry Fisher, who will light studio interiors to look natural instead of pouring in light from every source. A lot of it is a matter of conviction: look out of that window and what you see couldn't look more like a painted backdrop. If it *was* a backdrop, everyone would be self-conscious about it, but since we know it's real, we take it on trust that it will also look real.'

The shot upstairs is now in the can, and I wander up to have a word with Losey. He seems happy and relieved that the film is actually under way, after endless delays and worries about financing, which have finally been resolved in a rather mysterious co-production deal between ('or so they tell us') Associated British and M-G-M. The project actually goes back some ten years, and Harold Pinter came on to the scene some six years ago, when Losey first asked him to read the book. His reaction to it was immediate and alarming. 'I was reading it all at one sitting and, as it happened, alone in the house. And suddenly, at a certain point near the climax of the story, I found myself in floods of tears. Really weeping. A few pages later I was off again. It was all very eerie. And when Joe asked if I would like to write a script based on the book my first thought was, impossible: I shall just be in tears for months at a time.'

All the same, he launched eagerly

LOSEY AT MELTON CONSTABLE.

into a script, and had written about a third of the first draft when it transpired that they did not have the rights, which a Swiss gentleman had apparently acquired. It took nearly five years to sort that out, while the project hung fire. Finally it was off again, and the present script was completed about eighteen months ago, to be shot absolutely unchanged. ('No,' says Pinter, 'I changed one word last week.')

Pinter, at any rate, was glad in retrospect that the film had to be delayed. 'Looking back at what I had done the first time, I realised that I had missed a whole aspect, perhaps to me now the most important aspect, of the book. I had concentrated on a straight dramatisation of the central story about the young boy and the lovers. Now what I find most exciting about the subject is the role of time: the annihilation of time by the man's return to the scene of his childhood experience.'

'In the book there is a prologue where he finds a locked diary and this sends him back to his childhood; and then there is a final section, more than just an epilogue, about how this return to the past affects him now. I didn't think that you could do it like that in the film, so what I have done is to start in the past, with the story of the boy, and then

gradually as the film progresses we see things that don't quite belong: an old man, an old woman, the village changed by the passage of many years. And these scenes are not in a coherent, consecutive time scheme within themselves: they change, and break off and backtrack. You see the old man at one moment looking at a particular cottage, just when the boy has been looking at it, and you see him actually arriving in the village quite a bit later.

'Gradually, I hope these two aspects of the film will grow together, so that the audience comes to understand that the old man is the boy, that the old woman is the young woman in the earlier time. They will, as it were, co-exist in one time-scale, with the present being not the starting-point but something which is seen rather in the context of the past, in seemingly incoherent flashes-forward. I find this whole subject of time and memory particularly exciting just now, and the film is very complex in this respect, with a lot of voice over and juxtaposition of apparently unrelated things. But I think it will work. It is all easier to make clear on film than to talk about.'

At any rate, there is one thing the cast seem agreed on: that the script is the best they have ever worked on, and

that working with Losey is an actor's dream. I chat to Margaret Leighton, Michael Gough and Edward Fox in Michael Gough's palatial dressing-room, where they are relaxing familiarly between scenes (one advantage of shooting in a deserted country house is that everyone has quarters of extravagant size, even if the plumbing is liable to spit up the occasional frog when the fountains are turned on). Margaret Leighton is dressed, a trifle bizarrely, in a white lacy skirt and a man's collarless shirt. This, it transpires, is because she is all ready to join in the lads' cricket match on the front lawn, into which she made a devastatingly effective incursion the previous day.

Observes Margaret Leighton: 'The only trouble is, I have this faint worry that everything is going too well. On the last film I made (*The Madwoman of Chaillot*), we all had an absolutely lovely time, and unfortunately it did not turn out a very good film. I sometimes wonder if there is a sort of law which says that the best things you do are always the ones you least liked doing.' On that ruling, *The Go-Between* should turn out to be one of the worst films of all time. Somehow, I don't quite imagine it will work out that way.

JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR

"THE GO-BETWEEN": DOMINIC GUARD, RICHARD GIBSON.





"ZOO IN BUDAPEST": GENE RAYMOND.

Elliott Stein **NEW YORK 1970**

THE INSATIABLE FOOF subsists mainly on a diet of 'Golden Oldies'. In the past, the New York genus often suffered from malnutrition. Those Friends of Old Films kept alive by occasional strong projections at the Huff Society, or the Museum of Modern Art's Brown-Borzone Emergency Nitrate Injection Centre, are now in good shape again. In 1970, the foof's cup ran over. Indeed, a Beast With a Thousand Eyes would have been kept busy with all of the great vintages coaxed out of the vaults this year—at the Museum (at last, Murnau's *City Girl*, Borzone's gorgeous *Lazybones*), at William Everson's invaluable 'Lost Strayed and Forgotten' weekly course at the New School, in the new clubs springing up in converted garages or lofts, and above all at Dan Talbot's New Yorker Theatre, the most enterprising of the city's art houses. There, a staggering collection of 16 20th Century-Fox 'vaulties', the majority

early sound films by major directors, could be seen. Most had been invisible here for over thirty years.

The ball had been set rolling in Hollywood last year when Alex Gordon (formerly producer at AIP and arch foof himself) was engaged by Fox as archivist for a TV series. In the course of his research, Gordon became aware of the wealth of material gathering dust or rotting in the vaults. He convinced the company to essay theatrical release for a trial package. Nitrate to acetate transfers were undertaken. The restoration was 'a real chamber of horrors' according to one of the renovators; many prints and negatives were in a shabby condition, broken, scratched or wizened with shrinkage. The costly and tedious transfer work resulted in generally fine new prints. The New Yorker series proved a success; another newly rescued group of films will be put on view next season.

Down to cases, with best things first: Rowland V. Lee's *Zoo in Budapest* (1933) stood out as the great rediscovery. Except for a short final scene, all of this marvellously poetic work takes place in an Arthur Rackhamesque *Tiergarten* which serves as refuge for the three main characters. Zani (Gene Raymond), son of the ex-headkeeper, has grown up in the zoo, the only world he knows. He is on lovingly communicative terms with the animals and hates people from the outside world. His habit of snatching women visitors' furs—particularly those of an obnoxious countess who had come to purchase the zoo's fox for conversion into a muff—has gotten him into trouble with the authorities. Zani aids a girl from the orphan asylum (Eve—Loretta Young) to flee from *her* keepers. They spend the night together in a deserted bear cave, where they are joined by an unhappy boy from a rich family who has fled his governess.



THE YEAR OF THE Foof



The trio of fugitives are hunted down like animals during a long night in the deserted zoo. When captured, the lovers owe their redemption to Zani's valour during the spectacular finale: the escape of all the beasts, an extravagantly ferocious battle-ballet of maddened elephants, bristling porcupines and flying tigers.

The passages leading up to this fantastic action sequence are remarkable for their balance of narrative vigour and romantic lyricism. Lee Garmes' camera links sinuous *art nouveau* tracking shots which establish the physical layout of the menageries and introduce characters (reminiscences of his previous work with Sternberg here) and slow, caressing movements during the glowing idyllic passages. An exquisite scene is set in the marsh at dusk (impressionism of sound and image: foliage and preening birds seen through the mist, Debussy music), when Eve, hiding in the bird sanctuary, removes the drab orphan's uniform she has worn all her life and puts on woman's clothing for the first time. Zani arrives, feels her beating heart and remarks that she is 'all moulted'.

The villain, cage-sweeper Heinie (Paul Fix) is identified with the hyenas (his entrances are accompanied by Wagner's *Niebelungen* motif), and serves as a maleficent link between the human world and that of the beasts. Indeed, the film seems to be showing us life as a series of interconnecting zoo-prisons—there are stunning movements during which the camera stalks through the inside of cages and we see the humans from the animals' point of view. The orphans, themselves behind bars all week, are taken to the zoo on Thursdays to give the girls the illusion that they are better off than the animals.

Under Lee's direction, Raymond (elsewhere often just a tolerable second-leading man) is a model of gentle virility, and Loretta Young an ideal fairy-tale heroine. In spite of a long career (he started working with Ince), Lee seems remembered, if at all, as a derivative journeyman. His two Karloff chillers, *Tower of London* and *Son of Frankenstein*, are full of fine things; the elaborately composed *Son of Frankenstein* is the best looking member of Universal's horror family. *Zoo in Budapest* is a very special classic—yet one is hard put to find consideration of this really unique movie in histories of the cinema.

While they are about it, the historians might do well to tidy up a few sins of commission too. The resurrection of *Hello, Sister* at the New Yorker supplied persuasive evidence of the crying need to revise most of the literature on Stroheim. (The film is examined at length elsewhere in this issue. I saw it armed with a

copy of the original shooting script for *Walking Down Broadway* and hasten to confirm Mr. Koszarski's view that much of the release version seems *echt* Stroheim footage.) It is clear that the film was not 'completely reshot by another director' (Finler: *Stroheim*), or 'completely remade by Wurtzel' (Weinberg: *SIGHT AND SOUND*, Autumn 1962). It is likely that these assertions, and Lotte Eisner's '... There is nothing left of Stroheim in the pitiful remake entitled *Hello, Sister*,' can be traced to Stroheim himself, who, quite naturally disgusted by Al Werker's patch-up job on his film, probably never cared to see the result. Bergut (*Von Stroheim*, *Terrain Vague*, 1960) goes so far as to state that *Walking Down Broadway* was never made!

Broadway began with an integrated action-with-credit title sequence during which the four main characters were seen 'Walking Down Broadway' and the camera panned up to the lights of a street of theatres flashing: 'Fox Presents Erich von Stroheim's Production... with...' etc. This was all cut; as a bastard work, *Hello, Sister* was released with no directorial or technical credits. Millie (ZaSu Pitts) was conceived as the central character of the original; the plot hinged on her dream world, her psychopathic life style and her morbid jealousy of girl-friend Peggy's romance with pick-up Jimmy. The revision softens and reduces Millie's voyeur role, concentrating on the romance itself. With the shift, some bits of grotesque broad humour involving characters relating to Millie were cut—lines in Jewish dialect, prohibition gags, homosexual caricature—and above all a beautiful scene in which ZaSu recounted her imaginary love life to an enthralled hunchbacked landlady and a turtle named Lady Godiva.

There are entire scenes embedded in *Hello, Sister* which harken back to *Greed* and the harsh erotic ceremonials and mitigating sentimentalities which often lay at the heart of von Stroheim's work. We've only an imperfect idea of what the vandalism of Sol Wurtzel (the Fox executive who ordered the hatchet job) has deprived us of; the added scenes shot by Werker are actually well handled, but their scripting is witless, of extreme poverty. We have, unexpectedly, against all odds and oracles, been gifted with half a 'lost' Stroheim film. Rejoice!

Men Without Women (1930), John Ford's first film on a Dudley Nichols script, resurfaced earlier this season and disappointed. *Judge Priest* (1934), one of Ford's personally fondest remembered works, lived up to its reputation, that of one of the happiest of all the Ford-Nichols collaborations.

Will Rogers is Priest, a lonesome widower, circuit court judge in an old Kentucky town, circa 1890. The character, taken from stories by Irvin S.

LEFT: "ZOO IN BUDAPEST". LORETTA YOUNG AND GENE RAYMOND. PAUL FIX (ABOVE) REACHING THROUGH BARS.



"JUDGE PRIEST": BRENDA FOWLER, WILL ROGERS, ANITA LOUISE, TOM BROWN.

Cobb, was to reappear, as played more externally by Charles Winninger, in *The Sun Shines Bright* (1953). The plot is fairly simple: the judge's fight against intolerance as exemplified by his own bigoted sister, a member of the 'Daughters of the Confederacy' who seeks to prevent her son from marrying beneath his station. All ends well, and as expected with a parade. The climactic courtroom proceedings are enlivened by a lovely Civil War flashback and a monumental exhortation scene; the dialogue is never less than vivid—Charley Grapewin, imbibing whisky, and offering some to the judge: 'Good corn. You can smell the feet of the boy that ploughed it.'

In other hands, some of the material would have verged on the 'folksy'. Or worse. *Judge Priest* offers the definitive half-human Negro caricature by Stepin' Fetchit (a hallucinatory performance by an underrated actor); and for good measure, a candy pull scene at which Hattie McDaniel sings 'Jesus gonna wash me as white as snow'—lyrics by Nichols. But the magic is operative: this may be heresy, but it seems to me that our tears well, not because of any real past recaptured—Ford's innocent faith and tenderness here endow a patently hokum slice of fantasy Americana with beauty and immediacy. The superb print had been located at the Will Rogers Foundation archives.

Janet Gaynor's sweetness graced two features at the New Yorker, one of her last silents, Borzage's *Seventh Heaven* (1927), and her first all-talkie, all-singie, *Sunny Side Up* (1929), both with Charles Farrell. *Seventh Heaven*, 'the screen's most popular love story,' which ran off with half the Oscars the first year they were awarded, stands up quite well.

David Butler's *Sunny Side Up* seems to be the first musical comedy written directly for the screen; and it proved a pure Hollywood delight, free of much of the staginess and grimacing to the gallery by imported Broadway stars which were a feature of many early film musicals. The story is a harmless poor girl-rich boy romance, the sort of thing in which the heroine says: 'You know, Bea, there's a song that expresses my feelings exactly'—and then breaks into the lovely 'I'm a

Dreamer, Aren't We All?'. Aside from its dimpled good-naturedness, *Sunny Side Up* is buoyed by surprisingly energetic cinematography for the period and the high quality of all of the DeSylva, Brown and Henderson score—'Dreamer', 'If I had a Talking Picture of You,' the charming title song, and the astonishing 'Turn on the Heat'.

This big production number is the crowning act at a society ball, given at hero Farrell's Long Island estate. When the curtain rises, several hundred Eskimo girls, tucked in fur coats, emerge from their polar igloos and start to sing, bump and grind. This stimulating performance melts igloos and glaciers; an oozy quicksand forms of what might reasonably be described as yoghurt lava. As the chorines warble, wiggle and start to strip, things get even more torrid: palm trees sprout up from the lava, the landscape turns tropical, giant bananas burgeon between shapely legs, steam starts hissing from the yoghurt, the entire set catches fire and the girls finally save themselves by diving into the swimming pool. This pre-Busby Berkeley frolic of inspired madness would alone suffice to ensure *Sunny Side Up's* immortality.

Spencer Tracy was represented by three films, of successive years, each in a different way an important step in his career during the formative period at Fox before he went over to M-G-M. When the studio noted the great impression he had made on the public in his first screen appearance (Ford's *Up the River*, 1930), Fox felt that it had found the 'tough guy' required as the house answer to Paramount's George Bancroft and Warner's Edward G. Robinson. He was vaulted to stardom in *Quick Millions* (1931), as Bugs Raymond, an honest

truck driver who, tainted by depression immorality, turns gangster. It is a quirky film with forceful bits, not really successful. Rowland Brown seems something of a 'lost' director. He made two other features, *Blood Money* and *Hell's Highway*, after which he is reported to have been permanently blacklisted for striking a producer.

No surprise that something signed by Raoul Walsh should be good—simple open-mouthedness that *Me and My Gal* (1932), a picture with no reputation whatsoever, should turn out to be the



"ME AND MY GAL": BENNETT AND TRACY AS CASHIER AND COP.

best of Walsh's comedies, and one of the most invigorating products of Hollywood in the Thirties. It is arguably the quintessential gum-chewing fast-talking depression-prohibition melodrama romance comedy of the period—superior to a dozen fine examples of the genre made by Warners at the time.

Tracy is crackajack as the easy-going Irish cop who woos and wins breezy Joan Bennett, a waterfront lunch-counter cashier. They work wonderfully together; a pity that twenty years and youth passed before they were teamed again (in *Father of the Bride*)—enough evidence here that they could

"THIS STIMULATING PERFORMANCE MELTS IGLOOS AND GLACIERS..." THE 'TURN ON THE HEAT' NUMBER IN "SUNNY SIDE UP".





FORERUNNER OF 'KANE' . . . HELEN VINSON AND TRACY IN "THE POWER AND THE GLORY".

have made one of the great romantic comedy teams of the Thirties. Brawls, drunk scenes, alertly vulgar Arthur Kober dialogue all first-rate, and the free-wheeling, unlecherous treatment of sex a pleasure. For good measure, there is a love scene which starts out as a parody of *Strange Interlude*—obviously the big *Marienbad* 'think' movie of the period. Tracy is at last alone with Bennett on the couch, and his voice on the soundtrack wonders (his lips do not move) how far he can go without getting slapped. Her voice (lips tight) wonders just how far she can let him go without being thought 'easy'. At last, he remarks out loud: 'Say, I just saw a funny movie called *Strange Inner Tube*.' Bennett: 'Yeah, ya mean the one where they say what they're thinkin' without openin' their yaps?'

The Power and the Glory (1933) was a personal project of producer Jesse Lasky, whose own Horatio Algerish career had been somewhat similar to that of Thomas Garner, hero of the story given to William K. Howard to direct. It was a major production, treated to special publicity which called attention to a new technique called 'narratage'. The critics raved. Tracy was rewarded with a better contract. For years, I had been waiting for a chance to see this film, nearly always spoken of with reverence as a brilliant experiment, a forerunner of *Citizen Kane*. The sad news is that *The Power and the Glory* is a windy bore; even Tracy is not much help, miscast, unconvincingly made up for the scenes of Garner's last years.

In 1933, what must have seemed

daring was surely not that most of the film is told in 'narratage' (it just means flashbacks)—life and times of ruthless yet vulnerable Garner, president of America's largest railway—but that the flashbacks are simply unchronological. This does give Preston Sturges' script an air of helter-skelter spurious density, although the flashbacks themselves are all dull patches.

We open with Garner's funeral. His life-long associate, Henry (Ralph Morgan), and Henry's wife (Sarah Paddon) return home to mull over

Garner's suicide. It's a long hard mull. SARAH: 'Good thing he killed himself. That stinker killed 400 workers at the strike.'

RALPH: 'You can't judge him by ordinary standards. He was too big for that.'

Cut to narratage one reel long, of Tracy's bigness. Back again to the Morgans.

SARAH: 'He's better off dead. That rat drove his wife to suicide.'

RALPH: 'You can't judge him by ordinary. . .'

Cut to one reel of Tracy's fairly ordinary marriage. . . and so on.

For the defence, it should be set forth that Colleen Moore, as Garner's first wife, strikes the only genuine note in the story, all of which is beautifully photographed by James Wong Howe. And if we must cull at least half a *Rosebud* from this molehill: Garner kills himself after discovering that his second wife (Helen Vinson) has been unfaithful to him with his own eldest son. His infant son is therefore most likely his grandson. You don't get *that* every day.

An intriguing critical postulate espoused in certain *arrondissements* is that the officially great films of a period often do not stand up when seen a generation later, whereas many which seemed at the making mere straight commercial chores do come down to us, not only as entertainment, but as 'art'. See *Gal*, see *Glory* now, and it doesn't seem too far-fetched. Does this really mean that when *Persona* and *Hell's Belles on Wheels* rise up from the vaults as 'Golden Oldies' thirty years from now, the superiority of *Hell's Belles on Wheels* will be *l'évidence même*? Let the foofs of 2001 check it out for themselves.

"THE POWER AND THE GLORY": COLLEEN MOORE AND SPENCER TRACY.





Richard Koszarski

IT SEEMS THAT Erich von Stroheim's *Walking Down Broadway*, his last film as a director and his only talking picture, was not 'destroyed and completely reshot' by others, as Stroheim historians through the years have told us. The recent New York revival of *Hello, Sister!*, the title under which the film surfaced in 1933, reveals that what actually occurred was a brief reshooting, amounting to most of the final reel and perhaps a few intermittent episodes elsewhere in the film, a total of perhaps twenty-five per cent of the running time.

The history of von Stroheim's last film is tortuous and bears repeating, with special attention to the known production dates. In the late summer of 1932 von Stroheim completed for Fox the film known in contemporary press accounts as *Walking Down Broadway*. These same accounts point out the extraordinary smoothness of the production, Stroheim's amicability, and his success in bringing the picture in for 300,000 dollars in only 48 days. Press sheets were prepared prominently listing Stroheim as director, and publicity stills were distributed. Such material was received by the Theatre Collection of the New York Public Library in November of 1932, before any of the later reshooting occurred, thus giving us a certain idea of what the Stroheim version was like. Then on February 21, 1933 it was announced in the *New York Sun* that, '*Walking Down Broadway* is being remade, now that

Erich von Stroheim is no longer directing.' On April 4 *Variety* carried the title change, and the news that only 62,000 dollars was spent by Edwin Burke and Al Werker on retakes.

That same month the Theatre Collection received publicity material on *Hello, Sister!*. The press sheet pointedly carried no directorial credit; Stroheim's name had disappeared from the posters and lobby cards illustrated, many of which were identical to those in the 1932 press book. A different packet of stills was received, all bearing the classmark 'VS', as had the earlier stills. On May 5 the film appeared as the sixth anniversary attraction at the Roxy. It was generally badly received ('a stupid little trifle, aimless and dull,' said one reviewer). Hardly any of the critics knew Stroheim had anything to do with it, and for some reason a number listed Alan Crosland as director. The film was laid to rest with a final blast by Herman Weinberg, who declared in *Cinema Quarterly*, 'there remains not a single scene of *Hello, Sister!* that one can isolate as having been fashioned by the hand that made either *Greed* or *Foolish Wives*.'

Since then we have learned that Stroheim and his film

ABOVE: STROHEIM'S BALCONY SCENE, WITH BELCHING SMOKESTACKS. (IN THE REDONE FOOTAGE AT THE CONCLUSION THE AIR IS CLEAR HERE, EVEN THOUGH THE BUILDING IS ON FIRE.) BOOTS MALLORY, JAMES DUNN.

became pawns in a struggle between Sol Wurtzel and Winfield Sheehan, who didn't mind if this minor Fox release was sacrificed in a producers' vendetta. Von Stroheim's contract called for him getting credit and he refused it, so it appeared uncredited (already one should realise that if the film had been *completely* reshot somebody else's name *would* have appeared). The film was forgotten, and its very existence was in doubt until last year, when a print turned up in the Fox vaults. Its return to public view, for its first real critical appraisals, clarifies many things about the evolution of Stroheim's style, and the new directions in which he was progressing.

* * *

But how can we decide how much of the film, if any, is positively Stroheim's? It should be kept in mind that only 600 feet of Stroheim footage remain in *Merry-Go-Round*, but that one can pick his scenes out of that film like plums from a pudding. Stroheim is possibly the easiest of all directors to do this with, and such an operation works very well on *Hello, Sister!*

Although the *Walking Down Broadway* press sheet contains no synopsis, we do have von Stroheim's own, as published in the first issue of *Film Culture*. The first surprise is that, except for the ending, the extant film agrees almost completely with the Stroheim synopsis, only the last seven minutes comprising action which is definitely at variance with Stroheim's version. To recap briefly the plots, in *Walking Down Broadway* Peggy (Boots Mallory) and Millie (Zasu Pitts) come to New York where they meet Jimmy (James Dunn) and his brash friend Mac (Terrance Ray). When pregnancy hastens a marriage between Peggy and Jimmy, the jealous Millie breaks up their engagement with lies about Peggy. But realising what she has done, she attempts to gas herself, blowing up the apartment house in the process. Peggy and Jimmy are reunited by her deathbed confession. In *Hello, Sister!* Millie does not attempt suicide but instead confesses her lies to Jimmy. As they are talking the apartment house explodes, thanks to the activity of a drunk who has been stealing dynamite and hiding it in his bed (Will Stanton). Jimmy saves Peggy from the resulting fire and they are reconciled.

Now the fact that so much of the plot is exactly similar is not conclusive proof that it is merely digested from the Stroheim version. However, it is difficult to see why a company would reshoot scene for scene a minor release, except for the addition of a new ending. It is even more difficult to figure out how they could reshoot this whole feature for only 62,000 dollars, much of it probably studio overhead anyway. But what really gives away the origin of much of the footage is the commanding style which permeates it, which overwhelms the obvious retakes, and which is unmistakably the mark of von Stroheim.

Strong mixtures of sexual and religious imagery in (usually) ironic juxtaposition are perhaps the most evident and consistent aspects of the Stroheim touch, and they are well in evidence here. Although Stroheim must forsake the baroque splendour of his Imperial films (such as Danilo's assignation with Sally, dominated literally by a life-size crucifix), Peggy does have a print of the Madonna above her bed (although her seduction is no longer in the film). Later, when we see her at the doctor's having her fears of pregnancy confirmed, the physician gives her a lecture on Da Vinci's Last Supper, hanging conveniently nearby. Leonardo, too, was said to be illegitimate, he tells her. The camera, on the painting for this line, now begins to track in slowly. The doctor then goes on about how motherhood is never a bad, i.e. sinful thing, and talks of the joy of the mother who brought 'Him' into the world, who so filled it with beauty. The camera is now on a close-up of Christ. One of Stroheim's last film projects was *The Romance of Leonardo Da Vinci*, and it is interesting to note his early appearance here.

As in most Stroheim films, the participants at one point or another visit some sort of amusement park, where Stroheim can allow his flair for the grotesque free rein, squeezing as much metaphoric mileage as possible out of it into the bargain. Here, the first place the two couples visit is Coney Island, where they encounter a variety of amusements with vaguely sexual overtones: they board a car which propels them down a



BEGINNING OF THE BATTLE BETWEEN MONA AND MAC. BOOTS MALLORY, MINNA GOMBELL, TERRANCE RAY.

long chute into a tank of water; they visit the fun-house, where grotesque dwarfs batter the entrants with slap-sticks, and where they must make their way through a weaving mass of phallic columns to a place where hidden air-vents blow the girls' skirts over their heads. All this fits in too well with numerous other Stroheim films for us to believe the scenes are the work of some studio hack.

Another aspect which seems to me a Stroheim hallmark that is seldom recognised, is his use of circular images as fate symbols. The recurrent shots of the roulette wheel in *Foolish Wives*, and the whole theme of *Merry-Go-Round* are perhaps the most obvious. Arthur Lennig writes that Stroheim uses the merry-go-round in that film as a cross between a revolving door and a roulette wheel, and this idea finds its complement in *Hello, Sister!* where the two lovers fatefully miss each other in the revolving door of the marriage licence bureau, thus initiating a string of events which leads to the almost tragic finale.

Stroheim was also one of the first American directors to make consistent use of the violent forces of nature, specifically

QUARTET AT A CHINESE RESTAURANT. ZASU PITTS, JAMES DUNN, BOOTS MALLORY, TERRANCE RAY.



rainstorms. The two protagonists of *Hello, Sister!* find their greatest scene of dramatic conflict played out against a fantastic storm which forces them to scream in a manner which magnifies their natural emotions in an uncanny fashion. This scene takes place on the eve of their wedding (Christmas Eve, of course) and brings decisively to mind that Christmas Eve sequence in *Greed* during which Mac murdered Trina. Such storms appear throughout Stroheim's work, perhaps most notably in *Greed*, *Foolish Wives* and *The Wedding March*. No retake director would have bothered to shoot this scene with expensive rain equipment on a vast and crowded street setting, as Stroheim did. But the effect makes this the most powerful scene in the film. Marguerite Tazelaar, reviewing the film for the old *New York Herald Tribune*, wrote: 'Some of the photography is good, especially the rain-drenched street when the principals meet to quarrel. Here the mood of the piece is reflected in the tempestuous weather and the hurrying, dripping figures.' She might have added that a lot of the photography is good, and the film marks a major early effort of James Wong Howe.

Even in the final fire sequence, which we know contains reshot matter, we may see at least some of Stroheim's original footage. There is a veritable documentary on fire-fighting (shades of *Foolish Wives*): a street sign close-up tells us the location is 49th Street and 9th Avenue; a policeman sends in the alarm; the 54th Engine Company rushes to the blaze; hoses are connected, ladders erected, and people leap into life nets; the ambulance from Roosevelt Hospital arrives. It is possible that much of this part of the finale was included for the sake of the production values, as its spectacle is quite convincing.

A final element which marks *Hello, Sister!* as a Stroheim film is the complexity of the characterisations themselves. Even in this truncated version we can identify the people as Stroheim creations. Mac and Jimmy, the two male characters—one brash, experienced and self-assured, the other innocent, reserved and warm-hearted—are direct descendants of Marcus and Mac of *Greed* and second cousins to the Princes Danilo and Mirko of *The Merry Widow*. Their close relationship (Mac is hardly ever seen alone, and exists largely as a decayed version of Jimmy) reflects that of the two cousins in *The Merry Widow*—they represent those Jekyll and Hyde qualities which Stroheim is always revealing in friends or relatives. Just like Marcus (or Schani in *The Wedding March*, or Kallafati in *Merry-Go-Round*) Mac is generally seen as a greasy lower-class slob. Like Marcus he believes himself irresistible to women, and is the first of the men to try to make it with the female lead, an attempt which is unsuccessful. Like Marcus, he resents his friend's success with the girl, but the resentment

here is completely sexual and does not have the overtone of financial lust which colours Marcus's jealousy. Sexual jealousy is a theme which runs consistently through every Stroheim film, and this one is no exception. Because Mac is washed up with Peggy he goes out of his way to break up her engagement to his friend. Millie also tries to break them up for her own reasons. Jimmy succumbs to their arguments, and their jealousies nearly ruin his happiness with Peggy.

The contrast between the two women also has precedents, notably in *The Wedding March*, but the most interesting factor is the addition of Mona (Minna Gombell), the prostitute who appears to be the girls' only friend. She seems a completely sympathetic character, making her way in the hard world of New York as best she can. There are very few such characters in Stroheim, and perhaps the African sequences of *Queen Kelly* developed this change in his perspective.

These are perhaps the most obvious things about the film which mark the individual parts as Stroheim's. But it must be kept in mind that his original version was considerably longer than the six reels of *Hello, Sister!*, and much violence has necessarily been done to his original conception.

* * *

Certainly the film as it now exists has had most of the stuffing knocked out of it. The shift in emphasis away from Millie, the ZaSu Pitts character, is probably the most obvious, but there are numerous examples of minor changes throughout the film. When the doctor tells Peggy, 'You are going to become . . .' the concluding words are actually bleeped off the soundtrack, although the message is obvious from the context of the scene. One observes jump cuts within single shots where words or whole lines of dialogue were later scissored out.

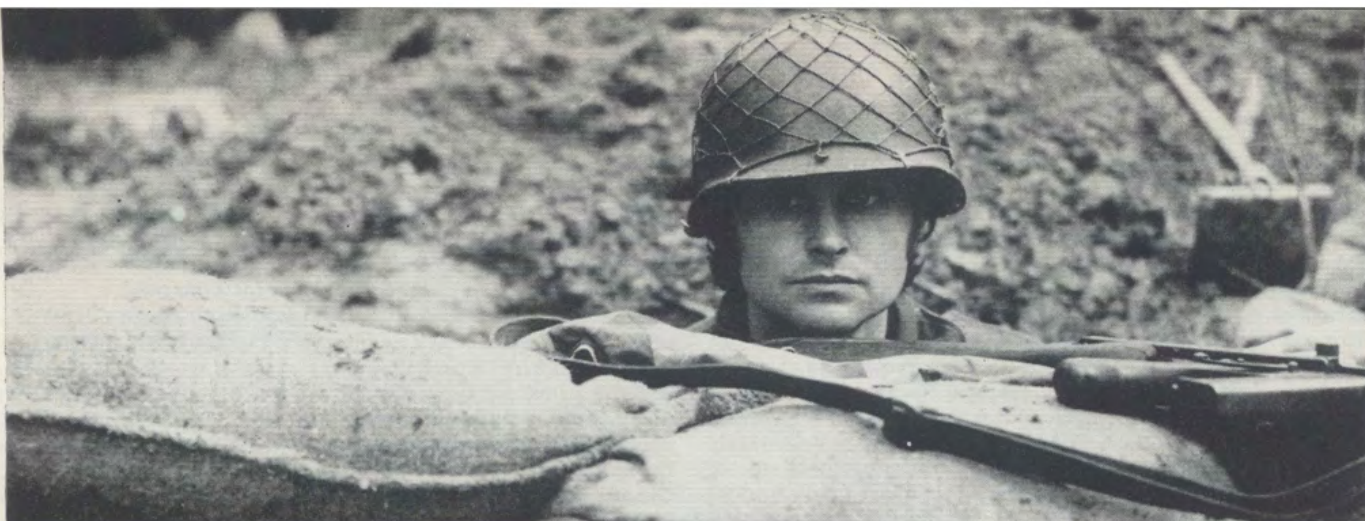
But despite all this manhandling the film still holds together fairly well, at least until the conclusion, and deserves its place in the body of Stroheim's work, a place from which it has been stubbornly excluded for too long by many critics and historians. The perceptive Miss Tazelaar wrote in 1933, 'While it falls to pieces rather badly at the end, the earlier parts have a human appeal which proves entertaining.' It is not too difficult to realise that many of the scenes in this film were obviously directed by a powerful film-maker: the rainstorm, a terrific battle between Mona and Mac in which they roll down a flight of stairs, kicking and clawing each other, and the love scenes between Jimmy and Peggy, which have a charm and humanity not surpassed in any other Stroheim film, are all stunning.

Stroheim was really striking out into new territory—territory which might even have turned him into a viable commercial proposition had the film been released without revisions, and had it been at least a modest success. Previously he had revelled in finding ugliness and corruption amidst beauty and splendour—the 'moral' of all his films of Imperial decay. Now, however, he is picking out little rays of beauty amid a vast confusion of noise and filth—a terrifying portrait of New York city life, with strong overtones of *Lonesome* and *Applause*. In this he begins to resemble more and more his mentor Griffith, particularly the Griffith of such films as *Isn't Life Wonderful?* Here the lovers play out a truly romantic love scene beneath the moon—romantic in spite of the fact that their balcony is a dirty skylight and the moon keeps slipping out of view behind clouds of pollution spewed forth from the commercial smokestacks in the distance. For a change, there is hope: 'I'd forgotten there were any stars over New York,' says Jimmy.

Even in its original form *Walking Down Broadway* was probably not Stroheim's masterpiece. Yet for its demonstration of the new directions he was taking, of his ability to turn out modest personal films if he couldn't make monumental ones, the film is probably a more important discovery than *The Devil's Passkey* might be. There is no evidence here that sound held any difficulty for Stroheim; the production of the film was disciplined and efficient; the results, even in this truncated form, of considerable interest. And yet the next twenty-five years of Stroheim's creative life produced nothing but unfilmed projects.

STROHEIM'S ORIGINAL ENDING (NOT IN "HELLO, SISTER!"), WITH MILLIE IN HOSPITAL AFTER A SUICIDE ATTEMPT. ZASU PITTS, BOOTS MALLORY, JAMES DUNN.





VERHOEVEN'S "O.K."

FESTIVALS 70

BERLIN
EDINBURGH
VENICE



CAPOVILLA'S "THE HUNGER PROPHET"

BERLIN

THEY HAD TO PUT the Golden Bears into storage at Berlin this year, and it's quite likely that they will be left there to gather dust. It would take a *Sunday Times* Insight team to unravel the events which triggered off the collapse of the Festival, but the pattern was classic. The jury, we were told, had rejected from competition the German film *O.K.* (which re-creates, in Bavaria, the rape and murder of a Vietnamese girl by four American soldiers); one of the jury members, Dusan Makavejev, spilled the beans to the film's director; press conferences long into the night, ominously shadowed by the Berlin police; George Stevens, as President of the jury and an American, cast as the villain; accusations and counter-accusations, interminable wrangling over the minutiae of jury protocol, the resignations of the Festival's chairman and director. With the jury itself asked to resign, the intervention of the Berlin Senate, and directors leaping up to announce the withdrawal of their films, the Festival was dead—killed off, some said, by an elaborate plot engineered in advance by professional agitators.

What had started (as I now learn from the British jury member) as an innocent jury request about a possible infringement of the festival regulation which headily requires all films

in competition to promote international harmony, ended in multilingual bedlam and the inevitable demise of the Festival. But whatever the cause (and even among the German contingent there was evident division of opinion, with Alexander Kluge proposing to rationalise the chaos by setting up an eleventh-hour counter-jury), the effect is clear. As at Cannes two years ago, the festival idea has been challenged. Cannes survived, with modifications; Berlin may not be so fortunate, despite the compromises which the organisers clearly hoped would assimilate the clamour for reform. Quite apart from the irrelevance of prizes and juries to the current film mood, and the always uneasy confrontation of film market place and critical forum, Berlin itself is an unreal festival in an unreal city (*pace* Günter Grass). When this year the German papers were headlining the first steps in Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik* moves, the 'International' Berlin Festival still stops short of the Wall. Berlin certainly needs the Festival, but does the Festival need Berlin? It's arguable that if the event were transferred to somewhere less politically ostentatious (Munich has been suggested) the Eastern Europeans might be more willing to participate.

O.K. itself hardly merited its devious publicity. It's one of those films which set out to shock and don't because one is always conscious of their anxiety to get the message across. Michael Verhoeven's distantiating devices (the cast introduc-

ing themselves, the Bavarian forest setting, and the specifically German jokes which the actors knowingly share with the audience) would seem in principle to be a good idea. In practice, though, this kind of *Verfremdungseffekt* is simply a hindrance, since one is aware throughout of the one-to-one transference from a real incident in Vietnam to a real reenactment of that incident in Bavaria. Brecht has his hand firmly on the pistol, but it goes off at half-cock. For all its solid foundation in the tradition of literary cinema, I much preferred Roland Gall's *Wie ich ein Neger wurde*, which concerns a schoolmaster who takes his class to a summer camp shortly before the war and finds himself half-wittingly involved in secret diary confessions and the murder of one of the boys. Nothing particularly new, but a fine, unlaboured evocation of a society's rotting fabric and the creeping spider's web menace of things to come.

But the best of the German films was Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Warum läuft Herr R. Amok?*, a product of the industrious Munich *antitheater* group and a considerable improvement on the same director's *Liebe ist kälter als der Tod*. Herr R. is an archetypal cipher of the urban middle class, with a safe job, a relatively happy marriage, a comfortable flat and a seemingly comfortable daily routine. *Alles in ordnung*, as his doctor tells him; but one evening, when his wife is chattering away with a neighbour, he quietly switches off the television, picks up a candelabra, and beats wife, child and neighbour to death. Deliberately shot in a casual, even unattractive style, with the camera simply homing in on the interminable small-talk and trivial embarrassments of the daily round, Fassbinder's film packs a sharp, winding punch. There's a perceptible weakness at the centre (the deadly simplicity is perhaps just too easy, and Herr R. is a bit odd to begin with), but for a couple of days at least conversation with friends was more wary than usual.

One of the Italian films fell victim to the Festival's collapse; *The Conformist*, fortunately, did not. Bertolucci's new film (from the Moravia novel) was the highlight of the Festival, and for me his most perfectly realised work to date. Jean-Louis Trintignant is a Fascist philosophy lecturer ordered by the Party to assassinate a leftist professor—as it happens, his old tutor—in Paris. Plagued by a childhood trauma which involved him in the apparent murder of a homosexual, he regards the assignment as a ritual expiation of his guilt, commissioned by the State and so morally unimpeachable. The film's piercing analysis of the overwhelming desire for normality, and the extent to which a man will compromise his conscience to achieve it, is conveyed both by a pared-down narrative format (the continuous movement in the film is almost musical) and by a visual style ambitious even for Bertolucci.

From the vast corridors and anterooms of the opening scenes to the final enactment of the murder in winter woods (shot in chilling silence, with Trintignant watching Brutus-like from a car), the constantly tilted camera constructs a kind of architectural comment on the character's confused psychology. And unlike Visconti in *The Damned*, Bertolucci's rendering of the fetid decadence of the immediate pre-war period looks unnervingly convincing: muted colours for minds willingly trapped into conformity at any price, the twisting cross-currents of suspicion and betrayal, a café tango sequence shot from above in which the lecturer's wife (Stefania Sandrelli, disarmingly frivolous) lets herself go in what is almost a symbolic farewell gesture to Thirties indifference.

The Conformist is due at this year's London Festival, when there will be more to say about it. So, too, is Satyajit Ray's *Days and Nights in the Forest*, about which, sadly, there is less to say than one had hoped. After last year's venture into fairytale with *Goopy and Bagha*, Ray is here back on more familiar ground with a story of four men who drive from Calcutta for a holiday in the wooded country of the north, where they variously pursue a local village girl and two lonely but by no means complaisant women who share their own educated, middle-class background. Ray's observation is as deft as ever—the men's childish excitement when they first see the village girl (whom they dub 'Miss India'), the sparring for

conversational openings with the older women, the momentary collapse of inhibition followed immediately by an embarrassed closing of the shutters—but somehow it seems more thinly spread than before. Until, that is, towards the end, when the camera's quiet scrutiny of an impromptu word game during a picnic seems to breathe life into the film.

Also disappointing, after the sustained, mesmeric intensity of *Sweet Hunters*, was Ruy Guerra's *The Gods and the Dead*, a weird blend of ritual slaughter (blood by the bucketful), ecstatic primitive trances, and violent family feuding among cocoa farm magnates of the Twenties. Again the audacious use of chant on the soundtrack is hypnotic, the style by turns florid and oppressively morose. Capitalism is auto-destructive, cannibalistic, seemed to be one of the messages; violence as an inevitable condition of a god who demands human sacrifice. But on one viewing it was too much to take: like so much Latin American cinema, it demands perhaps a willingness to submit oneself to a culture that is—as yet—at once too remote and not remote enough (unlike, for instance, Japanese cinema) to be easily assimilated. Less difficult, because more obviously a parable, was Maurice Capovilla's *The Hunger Prophet*, which charts the fortunes of a sword-swallower who takes to fasting in public when his circus collapses, is hailed as a saint by the peasants, imprisoned at the instigation of the Church, and finally officially celebrated by the State (quite why didn't clearly emerge). Oddly, and perhaps significantly, it was the ritual and mythological overtones (an abortive cannibal act at the circus, a legend re-enacted on the plains) which held the attention, and not the hyperbole of newsreel interpolations of the moon landing and the Statue of Liberty.

Not much else of interest. From Chile, Miguel Littin Cucumides' *The Jackal of Nahueltoro*: overly simplistic in its insistence on poverty and superstition as the cause of a peasant's unmotivated murder of a woman and her children; but it had something to say and said it honestly and with feeling, and without a trace of that airy intellectualism which so often clouds European social documents. Israel made a bid for international recognition with *The Traveller*, a portentous bit of guilt complex psychology about a former SS man whose retirement to the Negev is rudely disrupted when old memories are stirred by the arrival of a mysterious Frenchman who drops laconic innuendoes about the past and starts cutting his cheese with a paratrooper's knife: murder expected and duly provided. Alain Robbe-Grillet took time off in Tunisia and came up with *Eden and After*, another of his aesthetic parlour games in which, with supreme contempt for his audience, he plots a girl student's search for a missing painting by way of all the familiar distorting mirrors of cinema illusion. *A Swedish Love Story*, a first film by Roy Andersson, was good when observing the uncomplicated byways of a teenage encounter with first love, less good when poking too easy fun at the dehydrated older generation.

A final word for the Retrospective, always well programmed at Berlin and this year offering—in a selection of Astaire-Rogers musicals—a welcome antidote to all that Brazilian blood-letting. For all their narrative corniness, these musicals are evergreen, as the rapturous reception for *Swing Time* amply demonstrated. One hopes the jury troubles didn't stop George Stevens being there to hear it.

DAVID WILSON

EDINBURGH

FOR A WHILE this year it looked as if Edinburgh might have the dubious distinction of being the first film festival to be closed down not by left wing revolutionaries but by a conservative establishment. The Festival's right to hold public screenings of films not yet approved by a censorship board turned out to derive from a long-standing gentleman's agreement which the police—suspecting that some of this year's films were anything but gentlemanly—decided to challenge. Accordingly, private screenings of the programme's more controversial titles were requested by a panel of six magistrates empowered to determine their fitness for public consumption, and Roger Corman's *Bloody Mama*—refused a

certificate by the BBFC but granted an X in Berkshire—appeared the most likely non-starter. But at the eleventh hour the crisis blew over; the lady magistrate seconding the motion to ban the film admitted that she had not actually seen it but had merely 'heard sufficient', and the magistrates voted 4—2 to grant *Bloody Mama* an X certificate, valid for one night.

Despite a few other casualties in the scheduled programme—the German film *O.K.* is virtually *sub judice* at the moment and the London Film-Makers' Co-op abruptly decided to remain, with their films, in London—the Festival has retained the heterogeneous character that Murray Grigor has imposed on it in the few years since he became its director and freed it from the now rather restrictive tradition of John Grierson and the regional documentary. While the main Edinburgh Festival retains the distinction between 'straight' and 'fringe' productions, the Film Festival juxtaposes new works by established directors working within the system (Boetticher, Wajda) with the latest independent productions. Indeed, Edinburgh is fast becoming the closest thing we have to a central showcase for underground films and independent distributors, and you often get the feeling that there are two film festivals going on here rather than one.

Formally, the Festival opened with a chauvinistic gala performance of J. Lee Thompson's *Country Dance*, set in Scotland and written by the late James Kennaway: a kind of *Enfants Pseudo-Terribles* which, despite some four-letter expletives and the surface daring of its subject (aristocrat farmer's obsessive love for married sister drives him to drink and insanity), emerges as a piece of Fifties' family entertainment doctored to meet the tastes of a more permissive and Lelouch-ridden age. An intrusive score signals latent tragedy throughout its determinedly lighthearted moments, and Peter O'Toole and Susannah York play the eccentric siblings with a ruthless histrionic charm that ingratiates the characters' behaviour to the middle-class sensibilities it is supposed to offend.

Less formally, the Festival opened some hours earlier with a programme of independently made pop music films, including Peter Neal's loving and unexploitative *Be Glad*, about the Incredible String Band (a Scottish group!). It uses interviews and footage from concerts to bring out the 'Incredibles' disconcerting combination of music, myth and magic, and builds unforcedly to an enchanting mime, about man's misguided efforts to alter his destiny, that provides the occasion for the group's first, successful, excursion into electronic music.

But so far (SIGHT AND SOUND's press date limits me to reporting on the first week) the most exciting example of independent film-making has been the retrospective of Ian Hugo's work, generally labelled 'underground' but revealing a perfectionism and precision the term seldom implies. Apart from the semi-documentary first feature *Ai-Ye*, made in 1948, Hugo's films are not so much abstract as abstractions of an idea (the lights of New York, the Venice canals), and they manage to restore even these post-card clichés to their pristine integrity through a fluid succession of superimposed images. A former copper engraver who became fascinated by the play of light on copper, Hugo's predominant interest is in the convergence of light, colour and motion. His films create a kind of mobile impressionism, and his images—many of them shot through mirrors, glass or water—build to a descriptive poetry of the unconscious: a surreal terrain between light and shadow, waking world and dream.

Back in the 35 mm. mainstream, the picaresque *Macunaima* offers a hilarious, scatological Cinema Novo fable of Brazil's social and economic problems. Its director-scriptwriter Joaquim Pedro de Andrade manages, without sacrificing any of Rocha's national or nationalistic relevance, to be considerably less hermetic. His cynical humour is in the tradition of Swift and Voltaire, and many of the legends he draws on derive from international folklore: his simian-faced hero emerges a full-grown black dwarf from the loins of his butch mother and changes into a handsome white prince whenever he can kiss his sister-in-law; the wicked capitalist whom he slays in undignified combat is a grotesque cannibalistic giant.



"LA SIRENE DU MISSISSIPPI": BELMONDO AND DENEUE.

Cannibalism, the different ways people feed off others' vital energies, is a central theme, and the hero whose powers of survival the film celebrates (until he's devoured by a man-eating mermaid) is a major culprit, whether stealing food and girls from his brothers, greedily sharing the picnic of a tramp reduced to chewing slices of his own testicles, or pimping off the revolution by serving as gigolo to a sexy guerrilla eventually exploded by her own time-bomb.

Photographed in brilliant colour by Guido Cosulich, *Macunaima* interweaves familiar Cinema Novo themes—Brazil's racism and poverty, the conservatism of a peasant mentality that puts its faith in luck and cunning rather than political change, the migration from country to city—in a surreal pageant no less revolutionary for being entertaining.

Gas-s-s!, Roger Corman's picaresque fable about America's socio-economic alternatives, is considerably less successful. Seemingly born of *Easy Rider* by *Week-End* and *Wild in the Streets*, it concerns a hippy odyssey through a United States where everyone over twenty-five has been killed by a deadly nerve gas and where Law-and-Orderism is maintained by the new middle class, Hell's Angels, whose authority is threatened by a fraternity football team, determinedly sacking cities and reducing their populations to slavery. Much of the satire misses its mark and it is not even clear whether the utopian ending is intended cynically or prophetically. Though devotees may be amused by the countless cross-references to other Corman films (Poe periodically showing up on a motorbike with Leonore riding pillion), it's sad to see the people brought to life in *Wild Angels* reduced to the stereotypes they are in other films. Corman's strength has always been in exploring the point where fantasy and reality blur. With plain fantasy he's considerably less effective, and the film exudes a sad kind of self-consciousness.

In contrast, even in the dubbed version shown here, *La Sirene du Mississippi* is quintessential Truffaut. Based, like *The Bride Wore Black*, on a William Irish novel, it concerns a conventional businessman (Belmondo) determined to love his carefully selected mail-order bride (Deneuve), and constantly obliged by gradual revelations of her sinister past and real identity to modify his preconceptions. The connection between Truffaut's Hitchcockery and his romantic idealism has never shown more clearly. In his universe governed by chance not choice, the only true love is one that accepts with like equanimity the mysteries of future and past. And in another amoral celebration of the unforeseen, his hero finds a greater happiness as a penniless murderer on the run than in the social role for which he had groomed himself.

JAN DAWSON



ANNA KARINA IN "L'ALLIANCE".

VENICE

HOW MANY GOOD FILMS does it take to make a good festival? It's an impossible question to answer, but by any standards Venice 1970 was a disaster and confirmed last year's sneaking suspicions that the new regime under Ernesto G. Laura was going to tread an uneasy tightrope between fashion and fustian. Perhaps, by the time I have rhapsodised over Bertolucci, Szabó, Barbara Loden and the handful of other needles found lurking in the haystack, Venice won't sound too bad; but then festival reports are notoriously unbalanced since there never seems much point in expatiating upon the horrors one is forced to sit through. Or rather, storm out of.

There appeared to be no end, for instance, to films like Jaakko Pakkasvirta's *Summer Rebellion* (a glancing blow, *Darling*-style, at the Finnish consumer society by way of the glossy life of a fashion model), or the Yugoslavian *Bube U Glavi* (a wide-angle, upside-down camera romp by Misa Radivojevic round two young people driven into an asylum by the pressures of circumstance and society), whose only distinction was that their directors had seen a lot of movies and absorbed a lot of smartness. Apparently equally interminable was the flow of films offering beanfeasts of culture and

significance. Russia started the rot with almost three hours of *Crime and Punishment*, directed by Lev Kulidjanov as though to cut a line of golden prose would be a mortal sin. Britain carried on stoutly with Laurence Olivier's startlingly prosaic record of the National Theatre production of *The Three Sisters*, all pregnant pauses and no Chekhov. And Argentina delivered the *coup de grâce* with Marcos Madanes' *El Señor Presidente*, an indescribable hotchpotch of political intrigue, droopy sentiment and lusty tortures, evidently intended as a bitter social indictment but looking more like an hilarious variation on *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* executed in a style reminiscent of the tattier excesses of Caligariism.

How, one wondered, could *anybody* have selected such rubbish as *El Señor Presidente* for a festival . . . and how, indeed, could the same committee have recognised the shy, elusive charm of Barbara Loden's *Wanda*, which, after initial misgivings occasioned by the news that the director was Elia Kazan's wife, that she played the lead herself, and that the film was a semi-underground blow-up from 16 mm., turned out to be the sleeper of the Festival.

Inevitably, I suppose, one has to say that this is *Bonnie and Clyde* told the way it looked rather than the way it felt. Deglamorised, in a word, and with its touching note of tragedy stemming from the characters' total inability to cope with either themselves or the world they live in. Fragile, freakish and forlorn in grubby jeans and hair-curlers, Barbara Loden plays one of those Fellini waifs who look on the world with shining innocence and seem to thrive on misfortune. Laconically agreeing that she is a lousy wife and mother, she drifts out of the divorce courts into a one-night affair with a travelling salesman, is unceremoniously dumped by the way-side, loses all her belongings, and finally stumbles into a bar to cadge a free drink from the barman. He, as it happens, is tied up under the counter, and the greyish, bookish man she accosts is busy rifling the till. And since the latter's imagination won't stretch far enough to encompass this unexpected development, he just takes her along for the ride.

Fellini, I said. But there is nothing coy about the edgy, uncertain relationship which springs up between the pair as they embark on a sordid little career of petty crime, he infuriated by her scatterbrained incompetence, she terrified by his propensity for violence. They end, just before the inevitable disaster, in a kind of loving, but only because the gulf of age, temperament and experience which yawns between them is gradually lessened, unnoticed by either, by the yearning loneliness which each suffers but cannot recognise in the other. Impossible, in the space I have here, to define the strange, sidelong poetry of scenes like one in which they stop for an alfresco meal in a field and he suddenly leaps up on top of the car as an aeroplane flies overhead, calling 'Come back! Come back!' Impossible, too, to draw out the note of indefinably quirkish humour which runs through both characters and situations to give them an engaging air of self-deprecation. But Barbara Loden, actress and director, is definitely somebody.

So, too, is Bernardo Bertolucci. No news to his admirers, but for the rest of us—if glowing reports of *The Conformist* from Berlin are to be believed—he seems once and for all to have thrown off his early uncertainties and the second-hand Godardery of *Partner*. *The Spider's Strategy*, adapted from a story by Borges, is a television film but looks so stunning that it seems like *l'èse-majesté* to say so. Behind the credits we are shown a series of animal paintings by Ligabue, brilliant, glittering studies, distantly echoing the half-hallucinatory, half-crazed world of Douanier Rousseau. Then a train draws in at a trim little country station, a young man gets off and walks through the dark, deserted streets, past isolated figures or little groups huddled in doorways, until he emerges in a cool, airy mansion hung with ivy and grapevines tinged with the luminous green of the jungle.

He has come, it transpires, to investigate a lingering mystery about what really happened one day in 1936 when his father supposedly died in an assassination attempt on Mussolini, and was subsequently consecrated as the town hero. He is warmly welcomed by his father's mistress (Alida Valli), who tells him part of the story. He meets his father's three staunch,

"A LOVE FILM".





"THE SPIDER'S STRATEGY"

anti-Fascist friends, who tell him more but only increase his sense that something is being kept from him. He is chased away by guards when he tries to penetrate the stronghold inhabited by the town's leading Fascist. And finally, half-exasperated by the maze of misinformation, half-terrified by his sense of being an unwelcome intruder on a town buried with its memories, he decides to leave, only to be drawn irresistibly back when he hears, as he waits at the station, the music from *Rigoletto* apparently coming from nowhere and echoing that night in 1936 when the attempt on Mussolini's life was made in the opera house.

This time, in a hallucinating but perfectly rational time slip, he becomes identified with his father to discover the true meaning of fear and courage, and, incidentally, the truth of what happened that day in 1936. Characteristically, in a film which gives free, beautifully controlled rein to his taste for bizarre jokes with its crossbred atmosphere of Rousseau's enchanted jungle and Hollywood's haunted house, Bertolucci ends with a last shot which both confirms and denies the whole thing, at the same time opening up intriguing new avenues of interpretation. In Venice the film was shown subtitled and wasn't too easy to follow in its verbal fireworks: *à suivre*, therefore, when and if it comes to London.

An odd footnote to *The Spider's Strategy* came with Christian de Chalonge's *L'Alliance*, a quaintly engaging film based on a novel by Jean-Claude Carrière, scriptwriter of *Belle de Jour* and *La Voie Lactée*. Maybe Buñuel should have directed the film to pin down the full flavour of obsessional ambiguity in its tale of a veterinary surgeon (Jean-Claude Carrière) who applies to a marriage bureau for a wife with a large house, gets one (Anna Karina), and promptly fills the place up with a horde of animal pets and patients. A tender, tentative love is born between the couple, tormented on the one hand by

his fear that she is betraying him, on the other by her fear that he is leading the animals in some dark plot against herself, and maybe the world. Meanwhile the weird collection of animals, birds and insects gaze gravely out from the screen, protesting witnesses to a world of human incomprehension, suspicion and fear in which they, too, are victims.

Simply and cleanly directed by Chalonge, who deserves three small cheers for having rediscovered the Karina of the Godard years, *L'Alliance* never quite makes the most of its own possibilities: something that could hardly be said of István Szabó's magnificent *A Love Film*, although the prevailing opinion in Venice seemed to be that it was simply a woman's mag tale of love enduring. Certainly the film is that: a Resnais-like movement through time as a young Hungarian sets off to France for a reunion with the childhood sweetheart who left for the West in 1956, and as the train takes him to her, remembers in a jumble of scenes and fragments, sometimes true, sometimes idealised, how two children grew up together through an unbroken line of happenings—the discovery of a live fish on a tram, the presence of the Germans, a sleigh-ride in the snow, the coming of the Russians.

But behind it lies a much more resonant theme—'Now at last I'm abroad' mutters the hero to himself as he sits on the train bound for France, and a sudden memory flash shows him rushing, free and joyous, headlong through a green field. Nevertheless he returns to Hungary, tearing himself away from the girl but happy in the knowledge that if only he closes his eyes he can carry everything he loves within him. The bitterness and the reconciliation of the Hungarian tragedy is cried aloud in two superb scenes: one a long, remorseless track along the counter of a post office where endless lines

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FILM REVIEWS

A PASSION

THIS TIME HE WAS CALLED Andreas Winkelman,' remarks the narrator calmly at the end of *A Passion* (United Artists) as a shambling, agonised supplicant is bleached from the screen. The almost cheerful epitaph has about as many edges to it as Rohmer's razor-blade sculpture in *La Collectionneuse*, but its first cut undoubtedly comes from Bergman's brisk transference of his withdrawal symptoms to his audience. Once again, narration is being used as insulation, to raise the curtain and to lower it in a denial of personal involvement that is knowingly and ironically unconvincing. Last time, he was called Jan Rosenberg; the time before, Johan Borg. And despite the elaborate dossiers that have been provided on each of the main characters in the film, it is clear that Max von Sydow, with his seemingly limitless range of troubled masks, is once again to be regarded as Bergman's chief spokesman.

This time the harassed hermit (*vinkel* is Swedish for corner) has been given a background that might suggest a temporary departure from the art-in-society debate were it not that Bergman's artists have consistently been forgers, failures, and dropouts. In all other respects, however, the cheerless ecology of the director's Baltic island remains unaltered, while von Sydow's pragmatic counterpart (Björnstrand has been replaced by the fractionally more sinister Erland Josephsson, collaborator with Bergman on a couple of earlier screenplays, but the resonances are the same) is disconcertingly named Vergérus, in living memory of the soulless analyst in *The Face*. The balancing members of the quartet, the two girls, are the embodiments of brooding integrity (Liv Ullmann) and natural impetuosity (Bibi Andersson), who have already grappled their way through *The Silence* (Thulin versus Lindblom), *Persona* (Ullmann versus Andersson), and *Hour of the Wolf* (Ullmann versus Thulin). It's yet another variation, then, on Bergman's obsessively recurring themes, and once more, superbly, a variation that adapts those themes, revitalises, and finally transcends them.

'This time he was called Andreas Winkelman.' When we first encounter him, feet

well off the ground as he fumbles with roof-slates, his identity seems clear—that of the gentle dreamer, responsive guardian to a small flock of sheep, prone to stop everything in order to smile at sunsets and cause optical illusions through his pipesmoke. By the end of the film, even his name has become as nebulous as his fragmenting image. Whatever label he may have borne before his prison sentence, whatever he may assume after this new breakdown, the tensions that convulse him from inside seem certain to return to destroy the façade. Bergman spells them out from time to time in giant Godardian close-ups, these 'terrible mental disturbances leading to physical and psychical acts of violence.' They are the result, quite simply, of living a lie. Andreas, it quickly becomes apparent, is the deceiving kind; his calm exterior conceals a talent for eavesdropping on phone calls, reading private correspondence, borrowing without prospect of repayment, wife-stealing, and, in moments of desperation, threatening murder. In words, he reveals nothing about his past; in his actions, as much of that past as one could need to know becomes plain from the moment a neglected bucket pursues him down the roof during his inept efforts to keep his house in order.

Employing superbly the discoveries of *Persona*, Bergman leaves great gaps in the film's narrative, perplexing jumps in time, omission of incidents later mentioned as crucial; he rushes his audience headlong through a fog of rumours, vague references and reports, hearsay evidence, the echoes of other lives. It's blatant artifice, but the effect is brilliantly naturalistic. When Andreas briefly dreams of a woman we have never seen before, what matters is not so much that she may have been his wife, or a casual affair at any point in the past, or that she may even be sheer Faustian fantasy, her vaguely medical air giving the greater plausibility to her diagnosis of his condition ('cancer of the soul—you'll die a horrible death')—but that he chooses not to reveal any part of his dream to Anna, and that she instantly recognises his lie.

The days when they were in harmony have been illustrated ambivalently enough in the montage of fishing-trip shots (Bergman's use of fish, boats and the sea has always been multilayered); but those days are past. The delicacy with which Bergman exposes the mortal wound in the relationship between Andreas, constantly concealing truth, and Anna Fromm (the name means pious in Swedish) with her desperate lip-service towards candour, is rather ponderously reinforced by the crash of spilt milk, but the total sequence is otherwise an impeccably judged portrait of emotional disintegration. Everything contributes its special charge: Anna grappling at her typewriter with problems of translation, Andreas wearily copying out another man's inspirations, the frustrated eroticism of the fantasy, even the desperation with which the couple cling together at the recognition of the ruin around their feet. If *A Passion* has its more banal symbols—the milk, the bonfire, the imprisoned butterfly—it is also rich in metaphors of torment such as these.

'This time he was called Andreas Winkelman.' Another time, perhaps, Everyman. What *Persona* started and *Shame* broadened, *A Passion* starkly continues in a catalogue of obscenities. Madmen roam the world, torturing and killing aimlessly: a dog, some sheep, an old man, a horse, a Vietnamese prisoner, the tiny bursts of pain, blood and flame mount into a crescendo roar that almost obscures the soundtrack as Andreas and Anna snarl in the snow. Their domestic confrontations are part of a nightmare that is beyond judgment; distracted from the expressionless contemplation of a television execution (from which Bergman in seemingly unconscious paradox omits the most ghastly instant), they kill a stunned bird, bury it in finger-scrabbled earth, wash their hands free of complicity and retire to a game of chess which immediately deteriorates into self-deceit.

Their lives are founded upon an intolerable conflict between the passions of the animal and the ambitious sterility of the cerebral. In a society in which both sides

ERLAND JOSEPHSSON IN "A PASSION".



have reached an unprecedented level of insistence, Bergman sees our choice as either to accept and exploit or to be passive. In the final shot, Andreas paces, caged, between the two. To counterbalance the atrocities, Bergman uses the particularly insidious nature of Elis, the man with the money (Anna's husband, the first Andreas, was also in his debt), the influence, the talent, and the conviction that it is sheer hypocrisy to shudder at the follies of mankind. Andreas, Eva and Anna are all dependent upon Elis for their shelter, welfare and support, and each is linked with him by telephone at a certain point in the film, as if on a direct line to a chilly, materialistic God. But Elis, too, is as much the universal victim as any of them, his wife betraying him in favour of one Andreas after another. He converts his environment into boxes stuffed with photographs, all of them misleading (the recluse Johan resembles a killer, Eva looks radiant despite an imminent migraine), and prefers, in tight-lipped restraint, to get no closer to the woes of the world. To care or not to care; either way, Bergman sees little comfort for any of us. Humiliation, as his spokesman puts it, has overwhelmed us like a sickness or a drug.

That Bergman should choose this melancholy point to return to the use of colour seems at first curiously inappropriate. As it turns out, however, it is precisely through colour that *A Passion* transcends his previous island films. After the gentle warmth of its early landscapes comes the misleading gaiety of the elegant golden dinner party, of which some of the jubilation carries over into the seduction of Eva, filmed through a humorously enticing red filter. The film then assumes naturalistic tones, gradually becoming almost monochrome, except for the uncomfortable session in Elis's bleakly antiseptic white studio.

Snow-dusted exteriors alternate with dusky—or at best subdued—interiors for the film's second half, punctuated only by the urgent flame of the police-car's warning light and the burning stable. The major exceptions are Anna's dream (seemingly a fragment of what might once have ended *Shame*) in which colour has not surprisingly been lost entirely, the extraordinary shot of sunlight blazing on to the dead face of Johan (the scene then fades out through red), and the final shot in which Andreas becomes no more than a trembling mass of disparate shades.

While Bergman can still be so plainly fascinated by such expressionism, while he can still build a whole subplot out of the exchange of confessions or the opening and shutting of doors, and while he is still prepared to experiment so boldly as to include in mid-narrative some interviews with his actors about their part in the film, it is consolingly difficult to believe that the despair in his message is entirely terminal.

PHILIP STRICK

FELLINI SATYRICON

THE ONLY THING to do when you have gone too far, said Cocteau, is to go further. Hence, perhaps inevitably, Fellini's *Satyricon* (United Artists). Whatever else it may or may not be, it is undoubtedly Fellini to the nth degree; it starts where *Giulietta degli Spiriti* left off, moving wholly into a world of dreams and visions, bigger and more bizarre even than the



"FELLINI SATYRICON"

highly-coloured fantasies of *Giulietta* in full flight. The result should be impossible, utterly indigestible, but paradoxically it is not: one adjusts rapidly to accepting the extreme ornateness of the action (what is going on in front of the camera much more than how the camera records it) as a sort of norm, so that effects which even in *Giulietta* would have drawn attention to themselves as extraordinary and exceptional here seem hardly more remarkable in themselves than a dead metaphor in everyday speech.

It may be magnificent, but it is hardly Petronius. Nor, presumably, is it meant to be: this is emphatically 'Fellini *Satyricon*', taking only a few hints of situation and a fragmentary structure from the classic text. Petronius was above all a sophisticate, deadpan or at most mildly amused at the casual couplings and re-couplings of his cast of whores, masqueraders and vulgarians, male and/or female. There is a curious charm, grace, and even innocence about the world he creates because of his complete refusal to be shocked by it, or to expect us to be. Not so with Fellini. Charm and grace are not particularly Fellinian qualities, and the last thing he ever is is a sophisticate. In a way this is his greatest strength. In all his films, though particularly of course those from *La Dolce Vita* on, it is the sheer spate of ideas that pours from him and on to the screen, like a force of nature, which silences criticism if anything can. Of discretion, good taste, or anything namby-pamby like that, he knows and cares nothing.

Especially in *Satyricon*. For the light and good humour of Petronius he substitutes something dark, menacing, lit at best with flames of hellish fire from some John Martin vision of cosmic disaster in the ancient world. Hardly any of Fellini's *Satyricon* is actually funny; it is instead a sort of nightmare vision of a civilisation on its last legs, over-rich, over-ripe, decorating its surfaces with a neurotic elaboration because form has come to be the only consideration, and what the form should

express counts for nothing. The point is made relatively directly in the little scene near the beginning in which Encolpius goes to a picture gallery in which the great, simple works of the past are held up as a reproach to a present gaudy, awful and artificial. The obscene elaboration of Trimalchio's feast, or the accumulation of freaks in the rabbit-warren tenement/brothel, which is at first quaint, then disgusting, and finally mind-dizzying, are not, in other words, there as a self-indulgence, for their own sake or for the fun Fellini has in putting them together. Their very ornateness takes on a moral quality, by provoking finally a moral response.

And this is essentially what makes the film different from its predecessors in Fellini's oeuvre. *8½* is a work which shows Fellini's creative imagination working at maximum intensity. Its greatest effect lies in a paradox of which, one suspects, Fellini was hardly aware while he was making it: that while it is about the mind at the end of its tether, the imagination exhausted and impotent, the film he has made on this subject is full of imagination exuberantly and fruitfully at play. *Giulietta* is a work of fancy rather than imagination, if we may try to preserve the Coleridgean distinction: lighter, slighter, less deeply involved or involving, it frolics pleasurably with and on parts of Fellini's regular mental furniture. What *Satyricon* does is to return yet again to these materials, but now using them in such a way that they contain a built-in criticism of themselves. The spate of invention is still there, but it is no longer joyful. Its effect in *Giulietta* is sometimes smothering, suffocating, where one senses it was not meant to be. Here, even as one is battered and weighed down by the sheer accumulation of detail, one can recognise it as part of Fellini's intention that one should be. *La Dolce Vita*, investing Fellini's private city of dreadful night with the face and features of modern Rome, showed us a few of the 120 *jours de Sodome* and told us that they were a bore and a bane. *Satyricon*, disguising the same city of

Fellini's mind as ancient Rome, not only tells us, but puts us through every grinding, asphyxiating moment.

Or makes us *feel* that we have been through it all. For the film does, though sometimes by a very narrow margin, function as a work of art, recreating effects rather than reproducing them. It even achieves that most difficult of feats, conveying boredom without actually boring. The later sequences lose their hold a little—though even here the slow unscrewing of tension, the relaxation of grip, seems to be intentional, easing us towards the open end of a journey continued off the edge of the page into infinity. We are not touched by the characters, we do not care at all about their fate (except perhaps slightly in the weird and inexplicably disturbing sequence in which they steal the hermaphrodite demi-god and then helplessly watch him die); the characters are simply part of the overall pattern, and it is the pattern which works on us if anything does.

As with all Fellini's later, more confessional films, I suspect that *Satyricon* is a film you have to succumb to completely, live along with for more than two hours and accept the discomforts as well as the insights involved in seeing things as Fellini sees them, if it is to work at all. But for those who can let it work on them, Fellini's journey to the end of night is a chastening and, surprisingly enough, an elevating experience.

JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR

CATCH-22

PEOPLE HAVE BEEN DEBATING for months whether *M*A*S*H* is *really* an anti-war movie, but there should be no doubt at all about the intentions of Mike Nichols' bleak film of *Catch 22* (Paramount). It is ironic that of the two films *M*A*S*H* seems more indebted to Joseph Heller's novel; the screwball black comedy that is Heller's trademark is central to the conception of *M*A*S*H*, but it plays a relatively minor part in the film of *Catch 22*. Nichols keeps some of the novel's Alice-in-Wonderland rhetoric and a little of its black comedy—for example, a scene in which two nurses discuss fried chicken as they change the bottles of fluid that dangle from the limbs of a body covered in bandages—but his film is more sombre than its source. The movie's jokes sometimes make us gasp, but they only occasionally make us laugh.

An anti-war epic like this film or *Oh! What a Lovely War* seems to me a contradiction in terms; these films are made on such a grandiose scale—they *look* so imposing and so respectable—that their anti-social bitterness seems slightly strained. An important part of *Catch 22* is its savage mockery of capitalism; but this can't help appearing hypocritical in a movie that is itself made on a budget of 15 million dollars.

In contrast to many Hollywood super-productions, some of the expense that went into *Catch 22* actually shows up on the screen, in the brilliant all-star cast and the gargantuan stylised sets. But *Catch 22* could use a little of the improvisatory lightness of touch, the anarchic, irreverent madness of *M*A*S*H*. The film is too impressed with itself. Striking shots are lingered over, the black comic bits are carefully highlighted, all the serious speeches



"CATCH 22": ALAN ARKIN AS YOSSARIAN.

are accentuated so that we will appreciate the film's nobility. Even so, it lumbers along rather monotonously. Nichols has not yet quite been able to transcend his nightclub background; though he makes a serious effort to give the film a unity of tone and visual style, it keeps falling apart into blackout sketches. (Part of this problem may be attributable to Heller.) Too many sequences can be reduced to a simple point—The Lunacy of Military Bureaucracy, The Impotence of Religion, The Naiveté of Patriotism—which is usually dramatised early and then tediously elaborated.

Still, *Catch 22* is largely free of the commercial calculation and baldly derivative visual trickery of *The Graduate*; in fact, the conception of this film is remarkably pure, clear and cogent. The book has been restructured as an hallucinatory vision of Yossarian's—fashioned in overlapping and intersecting flashbacks, in images designed to convey a highly charged personal obsession with the terrifying insanity of war. Unfortunately, this subjective point of view is not quite consistently sustained: there are a few set-pieces in which Yossarian does not appear—Colonel Cathcart and Colonel Korn in conference, Major Major giving instructions to his assistant, the old Italian lecturing Nately in the whorehouse. It is easy to see why Nichols could not resist these scenes, but they confuse our perspective in a damaging way. In addition, very little of the film's surrealistic imagery, impressive though it is, has a truly intimate, interior quality; the majestic, visionary designs seem coolly impersonal, almost superhuman. Yossarian's walk through a stylised, grotesquely perverted Roman back street reeks of Fellini and Dali. Even the most interesting and original images—the bombers taking off together into an eerie white haze, Yossarian walking past the giant airstrip and gutted buildings of the shabby, desolate camp—seem to have been composed by a spectacularly talented

art director (Richard Sylbert) and photographer (David Watkin), not spun out of the troubled imagination of the character at the centre of the film.

The structure of the film is more intriguing. Most movies that jumble their time sequences are very rational puzzles. If we work hard enough, we can usually put the pieces in order and come up with a straight chronological timetable. In *Catch 22* Yossarian's fragmented memories are not so easily rearranged. The transitions are extraordinarily complex: for example, at an early point in the long flashback that makes up the bulk of the film, Yossarian is hit in the leg while on a bombing mission. As he loses consciousness, we move into a memory of an event that probably happened later: Yossarian's painful experience with the dying young English pilot Snowden. This leads into fantasy, Yossarian imagining himself swimming toward the naked Nurse Duckett, and finally back in time again, almost to the starting point—the hospital where Yossarian is being treated for the leg wound he suffered during that first bombing mission. This non-rational structuring (flashbacks, flash-forwards, fantasies within flashbacks) approximates the movements of consciousness better than most subjective films, and creates a powerful sense of inner disorientation. The memories of the death of Snowden form an important motif—they recur regularly in the film, revealing a little more each time, and they reach a dramatic climax. By the time of the last of these flashbacks, we think we understand the horror of Snowden's death; but just then Nichols shocks us with a ghastly bloody moment strong enough to shake the complacency anyone—hawk or dove—feels about war.

The formal achievements of the film would be insignificant if it were not for the strength of Alan Arkin's performance as Yossarian. Most of Arkin's previous performances have been 'character' roles, off-beat ethnic star turns, a gallery of

freaks—the Russian submarine commander in *The Russians Are Coming*, the psychopathic killer in *Wait Until Dark*, the deaf mute in *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*. In *Catch 22* his performance impresses us not by its virtuosity but by its humanity, and it is rich and compelling enough to keep the film in focus through some of its most digressive episodes. The performance has surprises, effective variations in tone. In the first scenes Arkin deliberately exaggerates Yossarian's hysteria so that he seems shrilly paranoid and insane; as we come to realise that paranoia is the only sane response to what is going on around him, the performance mellows, always in proportion to our growing awareness of the horror Yossarian is trying to escape.

Some lovely quiet moments—such as a tender scene with a prostitute that is less self-conscious than anything I have seen Arkin play before—and scenes of increasingly intense anguish and anger transform him in our eyes from a madman into an eccentric but vital anti-war hero. Arkin and Nichols so skilfully solidify our identification with Yossarian as the film progresses that we are even willing to accept the flamboyance of the ending—Yossarian lighting out for Sweden in a tiny rubber raft—and share his sense of exhilaration.

Perhaps because he is here dealing with a more 'classical' subject than he was in *The Graduate*, Nichols can keep the material under better control. And he successfully avoids the trap that most anti-war movies fall into. Because *Catch 22* stays away from any scenes of combat, it never inadvertently glamorises war or makes it seem exciting: the most effective anti-war movies are almost invariably the most indirect. Heller deserves credit for some of the film's best conceptions, particularly the character of Milo Minderbinder (splendidly played by Jon Voight), a striking, outrageous parody of the cheerful all-American wheeler dealer. From the early scene in which Milo appears talking to the impatient Colonel Cathcart about a cotton deal he is cooking

up, to the moment when he blows up their own base so that the Germans will take the cotton off their hands, his character is beautifully exposed; the offhand treatment of these scenes heightens our terror at Milo's 'benevolent' Fascism. (Unfortunately, there is a rather self-conscious coda: Milo's ride through Rome, in which lighting and composition make him look like a sinister Nazi.)

In building these scenes to a macabre climax, Nichols demonstrates a graceful cinematic sense of drama which is new to his work. *Catch 22* is unquestionably a failure, too solemn and portentous for the modest rewards it offers, but its intermittent dramatic intensities, its arresting experiments with time in relation to point of view, and the power of Alan Arkin's performance make it worth seeing. With this film Mike Nichols finally reveals the first indications of the talent that his fans have taken for granted for a decade.

STEPHEN FARBER

A MARRIED COUPLE

BILLY AND ANTOINETTE Edwards, their three-year-old son Bogart, and their dog Merton, were living in Toronto, Canada, in the summer of 1968. Billy was in advertising, and Antoinette would run him to the office in the car nearly every day to make sure he wouldn't be late for work and lose his job as he sometimes had in the past, and then she would go off and plan what to do with his earnings—such as redesigning the kitchen or planning to buy a harpsichord. Billy would always pour scorn on her ideas when he came home and they'd usually have a bit of an argument. In the same summer, they all went to a lakeside cottage in Maine for their holiday. They threw a party, had a tremendous row over nothing the next day, decided their marriage was all through, and then sat down on the sofa and made it up.

At least, that's what may have happened. Nobody, now, can be altogether sure, not even Billy and Antoinette. For during ten weeks that summer their home was occupied by a four-man film unit with a 16 mm. camera and a budget of 225,000 dollars, and whatever the family did or said, in whichever room, from dawn until after midnight each day, was illuminated, observed, recorded, and (intermittently) filmed. From the resultant seventy hours of footage emerges Allan King's *A Married Couple* (Contemporary), comfortably expanded to 35 mm. with hardly a grain in sight, and showing an action-packed 112 minutes of matrimony at work. It could have been embarrassing, boring, arch, phoney, and static, but Billy and Antoinette would appear to be none of these things. On the contrary, there is little sign of restraint either in their behaviour or in their language. The film is largely created by their dialogue, a barrage of words that are hurled like missiles, a few of them clumsy but the larger percentage funny, scurrilous, and articulate. They also have a most convincing air of spontaneity.

Nevertheless, if *Married Couple* were really what it appears to be, it would promptly cease to function with any kind of validity. The unconscious rhythms, routines and tensions of any household invaded by a camera for ten weeks are unavoidably going to be mutated by the persistent audience into a combination of reticence and exhibitionism. Bedroom routine, for example, is likely to assume a new dimension of auto-censorship, meals would take on a new formality, the neighbours would start acting up, and even the smallest decisions (such as whether or not to swim in the nude) would be more complex to make.

That Billy and Antoinette should be able to argue as vehemently as they do despite the presence of a film unit may very well be part of their nature; the trouble is, the audience can never be certain of this. Nor can we know the extent to which that presence has encouraged the couple to dramatise, underplay, or invent their actions and reactions, just as in Allan King's *Warrendale* there was no conclusive indication that children and staff would battle as furiously under normal circumstances as they do when encouraged by a lens pushed into their faces. The documentary camera, together with the documentary editor, can create innumerable fictions—and when *Married Couple* works, it is, for all the verisimilitude, on a fictional level. Possibly the facts are that for some of those ten weeks in 1968 the Edwards home was exactly like this; more interestingly, the film creates an example of raucous, flexible, and possibly normal marriage that has enough truth in it to relate to any number of other, more real marriages.

Billy and Antoinette play their parts beautifully. The affectionate romps at night, the comatose mornings full of hazard ('I'm going through a period of destroying my feet,' grumbles Billy), the brief explosions over tiny details, the concern over whether the record-player is functioning properly, the interludes of lunacy, the half-foreboding, half-eager preparations for a monumental row—their exchanges flow with the ease and logic of any scripted marital drama. The crisis point, reached in the miserable calm that succeeds an outbreak of violence, could hardly be a more authentic combination of tragedy and bathos, in which they discuss the division of the house into his half and hers ('Some nights, you could even come upstairs and baby-sit'), until the

"A MARRIED COUPLE": THE EDWARDS AT HOME.



words at last run out and they cling to each other in a huddle of reconciliation. Whether or not their marriage was in fact ever like this, or might have been, or might not have been, it comes across on film, thanks to the ambiguity of Allan King's method, as all too plausible an experience.

PHILIP STRICK

GETTING STRAIGHT

THE FINAL SHOTS of Richard Rush's black and sentimental comedy of campus crisis encapsulate the film's weaknesses and ambiguities; its tendency—shared with its hero Harry Bailey—to shout wittily and vitriolically about pressing political problems while backing away from all but the most *ad hoc* personal solutions. As troopers close in for another bloody assault on the student demonstrators, Harry (who has just thrown his M.A. oral) and his girl-friend Jan (who has just renounced her chance of matrimonial security with an unattractive gynaecologist) espy one another over the waving picket signs and, moving with soft-focus immunity through the surrounding violence, proceed to rip off one another's clothes and make love as their fellow students have their heads smashed in by the defenders of law and order.

It's hard to read this as affirming that the road to collective revolution runs through personal fulfilment, when the film's preceding two hours have time and again shown political and institutional structures to be a major source of personal frustration. The message may be a clichéd 'be yourself' but it means nothing in the context of a society already denounced for allowing people no room to be themselves in. *Getting Straight* (Columbia) may hilariously document the pressures that drive young idealists into dropping out, but it sidesteps the problem it purports to deal with, that of the idealist who wants to help society by dropping back in.

Harry Bailey, six years outside the system, a former Freedom Rider, activist and veteran of Selma, has decided that being himself involves teaching children and has accordingly returned to University to obtain his M.A. and a teaching credential. Already alienated by his age from the majority of his fellow students, he refuses to become involved in their attempted revolution, considers their causes (from legalised pot to mixed dormitories) puerile and parochial, and outrages Jan by accusing her of going on demonstrations principally because the violence makes her feel sexy (something he's the first to exploit). At the same time, he is appalled by the complacency of careerist professors nursing their liberal consciences in tract homes in the suburbs, while they—more surprisingly—persist in offering him university posts, finding it incomprehensible that anyone of his academic brilliance should wilfully pursue a humbler vocation.

Harry, the one-man generation gap, with his schizophrenic mixture of outrage and indolence, achieves total credibility in Elliott Gould's brilliant throwaway performance, ably supported by Candice Bergen, revealing an unexpected flair for comedy, and by Robert F. Lyons, as a turned-on drop-out whom the script (less convincingly) converts to paramilitary zeal on a bad acid trip. Robert Kaufman's exceptionally witty and accurately idiomatic dialogue reinforces the film's pretensions to authenticity, while

the oppressive structure of the multiplex university (the location was an actual campus in Oregon) is conveyed in the many shots of endless concrete ramps and banks of computers lurking amid the seemingly unused libraries.

But while the film's strength derives from some unerringly accurate observation of comic detail, its satirical realism is constantly undermined by Rush's intrusively arty device of varying the focus within a single two-person shot, and by his tendency to photograph academic dignitaries through a distorting lens. The obsessional scholar who examines Harry for his M.A. and whose demonic insistence on the homosexual undertones of *The Great Gatsby* provokes Harry's freak-out ('It's going to be a hell of a surprise to Sheila Graham!') is appallingly, recognisably, real until the camera's leering close-ups push him into the crude realms of caricature and reduce the scene to a slapstick set-piece. Similarly, the police assault, though convincing in its evocation of Chicago, is so out of proportion to the handful of demonstrators who provoke it that it becomes an emotive catch-all symbol at the expense of narrative credibility. Rush may have intended his film to reflect a contemporary chaos, but he often seems merely to be exploiting the symptoms (from permissive sex to police brutality) he set out to explore. One is left wondering whether he really sees the motto for the Seventies as 'Make Love and War.'

JAN DAWSON

THE KREMLIN LETTER

THERE ARE TWO FILMS yoked together in *The Kremlin Letter* (Fox): the film it was apparently meant to be, and the film it actually turns out to be. The situation is not extraordinary; what is extraordinary is that both are interesting, and both in their different ways equally characteristic of their creator. There is little doubt that the film John Huston set out to make may be read in the light of the little scene he gives himself near the beginning. He is the admiral called on to discharge Patrick O'Neal (to his own mystification and against his wishes, as it happens) from the U.S. Navy so that he can take his place in a complicated counter-espionage manoeuvre (maybe it is espionage *tout court*, but that is one of several other stories). O'Neal is puzzled and unhappy; the admiral is coldly furious. He sees it, quite simply, as a dereliction of duty, a failure of loyalty and, worst of all, a wilful copping out of the group. O'Neal, as far as he is concerned, has chosen to put some sort of personal whim or maybe some private loyalty in front of his loyalty to the group of which he is a part. And that is unforgivable.

It can hardly be accidental that this, on one level, is the theme of the film. Not, of course, that the script (by Huston himself and the faithful Gladys Hill) contents itself with a cut-and-dried assertion that the admiral/Huston's point of view is right. But the whole latter part of the story may be seen as a re-examination of that subject which has so often come up in Huston's films—in *We Were Strangers*, *The Treasure of Sierra Madre*, *The Asphalt Jungle*: the perhaps arbitrary formation of a group to do something, idealistic or cynically commercial or downright criminal, anything which involves a group loyalty and eventually brings

individual members of the team to a choice between the survival of the whole and the interests of the single member. And the answers are not always easy. In *The Kremlin Letter*, for instance, the hero—as, amidst all the ambiguities, Patrick O'Neal finally turns out to be—eventually has to make a split-second decision about which of the group he will save, if indeed he can save anyone else. And there is no right answer; it is not even sure that the group is a Good Thing in itself.

But all this seems to be taking the film rather solemnly, and indeed it is. Even if Huston meant it to be about the group, loyalty and so on, it does not come out quite that way. Like a painting in which the painter has changed his mind about the design after the first sketch, *The Kremlin Letter* occasionally lets us glimpse an original intention showing through. But the final design is very different. The finished film bears about the same relationship to *We Were Strangers* that *Beat the Devil* does to *The Maltese Falcon*: mocking, fantasising, taking cool pleasure in sheer throwaway virtuosity. The plot is ridiculously complicated, with so many bluffs and counter-bluffs that obviously nobody is expected to follow every last in and out. Instead it provides a perfectly sufficient excuse for a rich gallery of grotesques. There is Orson Welles booming away magisterially as a very dubious Russian plotter with a taste for snapping up Klees in New York. And George Sanders, extravagantly bewigged and gowned, doing a sultry drag act in a San Francisco gay bar. Lila Kedrova as a Moscow madame exchanging titbits of professional gossip with Nigel Green, an Anglo-Mexican pimp disguised as a Czech whores-trader, over the samovar. Even Barbara Parkins (late of *Peyton Place*), if put in with an obvious shrug as the inescapable romantic relief, is allowed her interesting speciality: an inherited gift for opening safes with her toes.

No doubt, as serious people say, we should expect more of Huston. But even at his most casual, as in *Sinful Davy*, he does have the gift of making film-making look as though he enjoys it, of being so prodigal of invention that it doesn't matter if we don't care for one or two of his ideas—he's got a million of them. *The Kremlin Letter* comes at you in a breathless rush, and carries you off on a switchback course of comedy, satire, irony and deeper meaning. Even if we forget the meaning and concentrate on the fun—as Huston himself has done for long stretches—the eventful trip through Huston-land should leave us with little cause for complaint.

JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR

THE VIRGIN AND THE GYPSY

SEVEN YEARS AGO Christopher Miles made his name with a short film called *Six-Sided Triangle*, a set of variations on the theme of sexual infidelity seen through the imaginary lens of six directors, from Griffith to Bergman. It was an exercise in pastiche, slight but sharp enough to suggest that its maker had a feeling for the minutiae of style, the unconscious mannerisms that betray different temperaments. Miles goes to work with a similar dissecting glee on the foibles of Lawrence's clerical household in *The Virgin and the Gypsy* (London Screenplays). The result is no more true Lawrence

than were the flamboyant tableaux of Ken Russell's *Women in Love*, but it at least outlines one more viable approach to what Dr. Leavis has condemned as the 'obscene undertaking' of putting Lawrence's novels on film.

Leavis could not complain that Miles has missed the point of the fable. The antagonism between civilised and elemental values is caught in the juxtaposition of the film's two opening shots—churchyard and waterfall—and highlighted throughout by incidental images, some wittily interpolated into Alan Plater's screenplay. A blast of steam startles Yvette and Lucille out of their demure small talk as they cross the railway bridge; the film cuts more than once from the tight-lipped bickering round the rectory table to the grey howling rain outside. Miles' film, with its unforced sense of landscape and period, works to achieve far more thematic unity than Russell's; what it lacks is some of the latter's simple extravagance.

As interrelated character studies, the vicar's family is beautifully observed. Maurice Denham's rector is smug, ingratiating and ponderously facetious; Kay Walsh's Aunt Cissie, doomed to spinsterhood, chews chocolates with compensatory passion; Fay Compton as Granny retreats from her vindictive outbursts into a cringing show of senility. Miles fills the dinner-table silences in these early scenes with a superb selection of 'noises off'—heavy chewing from Granny, throat-clearing from the rector, the clang and scrape of cutlery—to complement the close-ups of boiled potatoes and lukewarm cod.

Yvette's provincial and family ennui is thus painstakingly documented. But Lawrence's heroine was a victim of more than ennui; *The Virgin and the Gypsy* is a sweeping critique of the entire Protestant life-style—its exclusiveness, its bigotry, its sanctimonious repressions. Granny, more than an exasperating old lady, is envisaged as a toad ('bloated', 'obscene' are the usual epithets), and in naturalising such characters Miles and Plater risk reducing their stature from the allegorical to the merely picturesque. The force of the gypsy's impact on Yvette seems especially diminished. Franco Nero is suitably virile and taciturn, but the recurring bleached flashbacks in which she sees herself escorted from the car and clasped in the gypsy's arms are on too wanly conventional a level of feminine wish-fulfilment to suggest anything like (the original) Yvette's urge to be subsumed by another will.

Here and elsewhere, no doubt, Lawrence overstated his case. There is something intractably schematic and axe-grinding about his writing in *The Virgin and the Gypsy*, which renders any attempt to visualise it in 'realistic' terms doomed, both by the extravagant contempt with which its minor characters are drawn, and by the creaking machinery of the story's climax. The flood, drowning Granny and swirling Yvette into the gypsy's arms, is improbably convenient. And although one is thankful that, despite the standard opulence of a Dimitri de Grunwald production, Miles has resisted giving Lawrence the big screen treatment, it still comes across as an absurdly bombastic denouement.

Where Miles' style scores is in the sheer conviction that pressure of detail creates, not only in the glum daily round of the rectory, but in Joanna Shimkus' beautiful low-key performance as Yvette. Her features, resentment and longing alike enveloped in a trance-like languor, betray her feelings only



GEORGE SANDERS IN "THE KREMLIN LETTER".

in chance close-ups—a pair of infinitely jaded eyes reflected momentarily in a moving car mirror, the stifled yawns and giggles at the dinner table. As the sisters lie in bed at night, discussing sex in awed tones, the camera sensitively underscores their contrasting attitudes by zooming slowly in on Yvette's intense, half-fascinated features, and out from Lucille, whose reaction is instinctively one of recoil.

Such counterpointing of images does a good deal to convey the growing isolation of Yvette, pitifully ill-at-ease in her own world, but too fearful to commit herself to the other. By way of synthesis, we have the self-conscious Bohemianism of the Major and Mrs. Fawcett—but musical soirées, nude bathing and a madly vivacious Honor Blackman add up to a world no nearer the gypsy's in its flight from 'civilised' values than the rectory itself. The weakness of Miles' film, and in some ways the strength, is that for all its corrosive faults and foibles, the vicar's family emerges as far more human than its elemental Utopian counterpart.

NIGEL ANDREWS

DOWNHILL RACER

AT THE CENTRE of *Downhill Racer* (Paramount) there is a scene in which the hero, new ace skier on the American Olympic squad, goes back to the family home in the mid-West. A reunion with his father is morose on both sides. The old farmer is silently sceptical about his son's European gallivanting; the son, boredly munching biscuits in the farm kitchen, expects some faint recognition of his exploits. 'Champions?' says the old man, out of a silence. 'The world's full of them.'

Downhill Racer seems not entirely to reject this exceptionally unHollywood view

of success. The skier (Robert Redford) realistically sums up his one talent: he skis faster than other people. He is also tolerably realistic in appraising what this skill lets him get away with, in terms of a rebellious arrogance buttressing uncertainty. But if this country boy skier, recruited into a team of smooth graduates from Eastern colleges, approaches the standard sports film chip-on-the-shoulder champion, the film keeps its characterisations well this side of cliché. Stock situations loom up; but James Salter's script leaves most plot ends engagingly untied. The team coach (intelligently played by Gene Hackman) ticks the hero off without converting him to a sudden onrush of team spirit. We never know whether his girl friend, his shiny fashion-plate dream of Europe, ditches him out of boredom, or whether she was merely engaged in a little sales-promotion for her employer's skis. (His American girl friend dimly speculates on her future as holiday waitress or dental nurse: a small scene, beautifully played on blankness.)

The dodging of cliché may look like a negative asset; it becomes almost positive when it sustains vitality in characters who by the nature of things are spending much of their time on skis. *Downhill Racer* is not ashamed to be a sports film: it is simply a better sports film than most because it respects the attitudes of its subject. Skiing scenes are shot less as lyrical interludes on snow than for thudding, dangerous speed—the main action of the film is framed between two jolting crashes. There is a resourceful emphasis not only on the mechanics of sport (crash helmets, goggles, score-boards) but on the mechanics of audience participation—action not always filmed directly but filtered through the bumbling identifications and over-heated excitements of television commentaries. It is a device that works, perhaps in somewhat McLuhanish terms, because this is the way most of us do actually watch



"ANTONIO DAS MORTES": ROSA MARIA PENNA.

sport: the TV view, one could say, looks realer than real.

Michael Ritchie, the director, himself comes from television; and what is attractive about his first film is its sense of reportage, of the transitory mood of training camps and airports and Alpine hotels, combined with a kind of alert reasonableness in the approach to character. Brian Probyn's camerawork ensures that the film looks consistently good, on and off the snow. The brief return to rural America is a visual impression of a homelier, run-down world: an oddly effective and quiet contrast, because it seems to be made within the terms of the skier's own experience.

PENELOPE HOUSTON

ANTONIO DAS MORTES

CLEARLY THIRD WORLD CINEMA demands our respect, if not our complete understanding—the spate of *cinema novo* films touring international festivals seems to deal with quite specific Brazilian socio-political problems which subsume the special awareness of Brazilian culture we so often lack; yet the same films are so often a wow with critics because they have some claim to changing our consciousness of the general nature of 'cinematographic language'. None of us would be surprised if Senegal produced a 'masterpiece' or two by 1975, and none of us flinch when the pre-credit sequence of *Antonio das Mortes* (Connoisseur) gives us a short glossary of terms used in the film. It becomes less and less the exoticism of subject matter that appeals to us, and much more the sheer originality of the treatment—and the *cinema novo* movement is at that interesting stage where form and content

are battling rather than complementing each other.

Glauber Rocha's fourth film is both a resumé and critique of his earlier work, a partly autobiographical reflection on the people and culture of Brazil. His thesis, developed through *Barravento*, *Black God*, *White Devil* and *Terra em Transe*, is that revolution is inherent in popular mass culture (the middle class of Brazil being a decultured elite aping the standards of imperialist media—vide the Brazilian cinema prior to *cinema novo*), and that cinema reflecting this culture might pinpoint the contradictions which make revolution a possibility and a necessity. Rocha's dialectic is not didactic—its elementary humanity is with the 'real' Brazil: Indian, black, poor, mystical, violent and sentimental. *Antonio das Mortes* concentrates especially on the 'permanent state of madness', the orgiastic nature of these people whose frustrations are channelled into a snaking hieratic carnival, a blend of African ritual and catholic ceremonial. Perhaps it is here that we begin to get lost, not in the choreography and folk-ballads but in the mythology of the North East, in the religious syncretism, and (every revolutionary secretes his 'ism') the precepts of 'tropicalism'.

What we lose on the roundabouts we make up on the swings—our understanding deepens with respect to the central figure of Antonio (Mauricio do Valle), who, for no payment, is hired by the land-owning 'colonel' to snuff out the *cangaceiros* leading a peasant revolt, finds his mission ignoble and swops sides in order to avenge the peasants and kill the *jaguncos*. Rocha shows that parallel with 'progress' (the long-distance lorries, the nationalist drum-majorities) there exists an almost mediaeval system of oppression by landed proprietors. The 'colonel', symbolically blind, is the

master of power (his trinity of marionettes represent the police, the church and the schools) and also love (his mistress, Laura, from the Bahia brothels), and is sufficiently real as a designation of his class and as a reminder of the Vargas dictatorship which outlawed African religions.

Like a mystery play, *Antonio das Mortes* is both opera and social parable. Whereas *Black God*, *White Devil* evoked the years of Lampiao and Corisco before 1940, here we are in 1969. Antonio is modelled on a living septuagenarian *jagunco* whose name is José Rufino and who appears in a short documentary by Gil Soares; the legend of St. George and the Dragon is still alive in the culture of the town of Milagres amongst whose inhabitants the film (and other Brazilian films) is shot; and the ingredients for revolution which Rocha underlines—Antonio's mystical moralism and the teacher's political consciousness—are perhaps more applicable today than in 1940. The triumph of the film is in the translation of the amalgam of legend and reality into an epic and lyrical whole.

Gone is the neo-realism of *Vidas Secas*, though it lingers like the tang of the earth in the grey-green hills and the leathery peasant faces. Gone are the Eisensteinian principles and Brechtian techniques, yet the montage of shots in the final showdown and the 'characterisation' of the padre, loping like Groucho Marx round the lovers, are still reminiscent. In fact, these elements are still there but they are transfigured by an acute stylisation, so that the carnival imagery is even more highly composed than in previous films, more vulgar, more plastic, more baroque. And here Rocha is often least understood: he is against theoretical cinema and for critical polemical cinema. His is rhetorical cinema—musical counterpoint, explosions of violent colour, modulated tonality of voices and songs, hieratic gestures, few interior shots, and space exaggerated by solemn lateral travelling shots or respectful motionless camera-holds. With the remarkable electronic music of Marlos Nobre and the formal beauty of Alfonso Beato's lighting, Rocha can inscribe the primitive improvisations of his peasant actors without over-decoration. In filming his Western ballad he has looked to Peckinpah's *Guns in the Afternoon* (and to Faulkner), yet he achieves the atmosphere of Leone.

Unfortunately, stylistic concerns can easily obscure the meaning of parts of the film. The relationship between the individual drama of Laura, the 'colonel' and the police commissioner and the collective drama of the peasants and *jaguncos* is opaque; the matching up of characters and incidents on both sides is a little contrived; the use of hiccupped editing and over-exposure for the 'colonel's' slaying is somewhat tricky; and the hysterical violence is never cathartic or liberating for the audience. That the film is revolutionary, in form and content, we are left in no doubt. Touched by grace, Antonio, the *jagunco* turned *cangaceiro*, walks out of legend into history, a hulking victor in these *tristes tropiques* plodding the road marred by a new dragon to be vanquished by a new generation of Brazilians—the sign of the Shell Oil Company, symbol of late capitalism.

MIKE WALLINGTON

BOOK REVIEWS

WHEN THE MOVIES WERE YOUNG, by Mrs. D. W. Griffith (Linda Arvidson). Illustrated. (Dover/Constable, 24s.)

HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN FILM INDUSTRY, FROM ITS BEGINNINGS TO 1931, by Benjamin B. Hampton. Illustrated. (Dover/Constable, 38s.)

WHEN THE MOVIES WERE YOUNG originally appeared in 1925. Linda Arvidson, its author, was married to D. W. Griffith in 1906, and separated from him about five or six years later (though they were not divorced until 1936). Perhaps theirs was one of the earliest film marriages to suffer the strain of success; for in this brief period Griffith progressed from struggles as an unsuccessful actor and aspiring writer to the first firm steps along his path as the most influential creative innovator in the history of the cinema. By 1911 *Pippa Passes*, *A Corner in Wheat*, *Enoch Arden* and *The Battle* had already removed American film-making from the 'factory' to the 'studio'.

Though the Griffith revolution was well on its way, and though the business men were already fighting for mastery of the billion-dollar industry to be, the world of which Miss Arvidson was witness now seems impossibly, idyllically remote from everything we understand as film-making. It was a bit like a village dramatic society, with the actors (out-of-work hams and girls just out of school) standing a better chance of casting if their hat or their waistcoat suited the role. In other respects life at Biograph's famous old studio in the brownstone mansion at 11 East Fourteenth Street must have resembled a Wellsian linen-draper's, with Mr. Griffith sternly governing his young ladies and gentlemen, and little Bobby Harron, the lunch boy, laying the tablecloths on prop baskets.

There is something even more romantic about the beginnings of the migration from the Eastern cities to the Western sunshine (Biograph was not one of the less reputable companies for whom the West offered not only saving of electricity, but also freedom from pursuit by the Edison Patents Trust). These pioneers made their card-playing (cheaper-rates-for-party-travel) train treks to a California of isolated farmsteads and oilwells and ramshackle hotels where they had to sleep three to a bed.

For a while you take Miss Arvidson's narrative as charming nostalgic chatter, albeit full of marvellous illuminations of the artistic discoveries and industrial developments of those years. Reading on, you discover the sharp perception and sharper tongue behind the faux-naïve appearances. There are malicious little allusions to Mack Sennett's care with money and quite funless unsociability; to the more than kindly interest of Kate Bruce (the lady bruiser who tended to play virago wives and mothers-in-law in later slapstick shorts) in the welfare of the girls of the company ('She had a strong maternal complex, had the maidenly Kate Bruce'); to the young ladies of the troupe who sought the Master's favour by mooning about with the works of Tennyson under their arms. She is especially unsparring of Lillian Gish: 'With a tight little hat on her head, and a red rose on the side of it from which flowed veils and veils, and a soulful expression in her eyes, Miss Gish was even then, so long ago, affecting the Madonna.'

Miss Arvidson noted how even in those early days Mary Pickford's mother was looking keenly after the financial interests of her gifted offspring. At Biograph, though, Mrs. Smith was harrying the producers to get only another five or ten dollars a week. By the time Benjamin Hampton came to be acquainted with her, she was using the same techniques on Zukor or whoever else it might be to raise Mary's earnings to a cool million dollars and more. Hampton's personal observation of the American film industry, and his history (which originally appeared in 1931 as *A History of the Movies*), covered the rise of the film as a maverick, piratical, but indubitably lucrative industry; and the attempts over the years of various interests to gain absolute domination—from Edison's efforts to impress the authority of his patents to Zukor's devious and brilliant

manoeuvring for dictatorship by control of exhibition outlets.

Hampton was a curious figure. Originally a journalist, he had become a vice-president of the giant American Tobacco Company when around 1916 he turned his attention to films. His fascination—characteristic of the period—with big business, and particularly with the business peculiarities of the film industry, led him into an unsuccessful attempt to manoeuvre Paramount and V.S.L.E. into a monopolistic merger. Later he became an independent producer in his own right. As a producer he was very undistinguished. His aesthetic outlook was limited (he seems never to have heard of the Russians or Eisenstein; and thought *Ben Hur* and *King of Kings* the highest peaks of the art). His contribution to the massive Hollywood clean-up which led to the creation of the Hays Office was to call 'on the club women of America to work with decent producers and to agitate for the use of the police power in sending indecent manufacturers, distributors, and exhibitors to jail.'

Yet with all these shortcomings, he remains a remarkable historian. The detail and precision of his record of industrial development and organisation is given enormous vitality by his personal fascination and the strong element of autobiography. Little in his history of the years from 1895 to 1931 needs revising today; and very much of his analysis still remains valid.

Hampton's key discovery—commonplace today, though very novel for his times—was that in the cinema the consumer for the first time exerted an absolute and final control of an industry. 'When films left the organised variety theatres and entered the rabble of small, cheap shows, they passed to the control of the consumers, the American populace; and the power then acquired has never been relinquished. This unusual condition has made the movies a phenomenon that industrial leaders, bankers and students have been unable to appreciate.'

As an industrialist who *did* appreciate the phenomenon, Hampton perceived the dangers—to become so real in and after the Thirties—of attempting to impose industrial organisation at the creative level: '... the inelastic business methods of bureaucracy replaced the loose practices of democracy in picture making. Now a new idea, instead of having to win the "O.K." of one autocrat of a little kingdom, had to run the gauntlet of editorial boards, production committees, and conferences of various sorts. A multitude of alleged experts awaited the fellow with the new thought, and when his innovation had completed the circuit of the studio's intricate system there was seldom a trace of originality or novelty left in it. The sharp shears and heavy smoothing-irons of the experts had transformed the wild, crazy idea to one of the rigid patterns in favour, at the time, with the studio head and his yes-men and yes-women.' (Hampton, of course, was writing as an independent producer.) There is still food for thought in the principle he reports: 'A poor picture will keep audiences away from a theatre for several weeks... No matter what they cost, it is economy to throw away the bad pictures.'

There is, altogether, a great deal to justify the reprinting of these ancient, long out-of-print and rare source-books on American film history; though the illustrations deserved far better reproduction.

DAVID ROBINSON

FILM IN THE THIRD REICH, by David Stewart Hull. Illustrated. (University of California Press, 85s.)

GOEBBELS COULDN'T HAVE KNOWN, when he rushed out *Kolberg* a few weeks before the final collapse of the Third Reich, that twenty-five years later people in London would be queuing to see it. The recent season at the National Film Theatre testified to the Nazi cinema's continuing fascination, yet with the exception of Kracauer's postscript to *From Caligari to Hitler* and a few random articles, little has been written on the subject in English. Which makes it all the more disappointing that one can't welcome David Stewart Hull's meticulously documented study of the period with more enthusiasm.

The trouble with Kracauer is not simply the blinkered *post hoc* rationalisation which can explain away the transition from *Caligari* to *Jud Süß* in terms of 'a secret history involving the inner dispositions of the German people', but also his failure to set the programmed output of the Third Reich in the context of propaganda as a whole. It is a fault common to nearly all studies of the period, manifested particularly in those facile and not infrequently hypocritical accounts which seem to want to categorise film propaganda as a phenomenon unique to Nazi Germany. Propaganda is, of course, a highly emotive term, igniting different prejudices in different people; it's also relative, which means accepting the disagreeable fact that *Baptism of Fire* and *London Can Take It* can and indeed should be talked about in the same breath. Like so many previous inquests, Mr. Hull's analysis simply fails to

acknowledge that in totalitarian states, and in countries at war, distortion of the truth is the rule rather than the exception. In retrospect, the difference between Nazi and British or American propaganda is only one of degree.

But it would be misleading to imply that *Film in the Third Reich* is primarily concerned with the more notorious products of Goebbels' *Filmkammer*. Perhaps one day someone will tackle the question one would really like answered about this dark chapter in cinema history: just how did the average German audience react to a monstrosity like *Der ewige Jude*? Meanwhile, Mr. Hull has little to say about this aspect of the subject that has not been said already. He has interviewed Veit Harlan and documents the genesis of *Jud Süß* (though his contention that it was the Lida Baarova scandal which influenced Goebbels' decision to launch the anti-Semitic programme is, to say the least, arguable); but apart from a few cracks at Leni Riefenstahl's expense he postpones judgment on *Triumph of the Will* and *Olympia*, of which his analysis is disappointingly cursory. Indeed, Mr. Hull's exasperating reluctance to commit himself to an opinion is the major weakness of his book. His rigidly chronological approach (*Olympia* is mentioned in his chapter on 1936 only to be earmarked for discussion two chapters later because it was not released until 1938) inevitably creates an impression that the book has been sewn together from copious volumes of notes.

The disadvantage of this comprehensive approach is soon apparent in the ratio of film titles to pages; with so many films jostling for attention it's not surprising that one can't see the wood for the trees. The book would have been much better, and much more useful than as a casual work of reference, if Mr. Hull had assembled his facts to illustrate a thesis (as Erwin Leiser does in his more readable if still rather fragmented *Deutschland, erwache!*). The fact that the Germans produced 147 films in 1934 is of minimal interest compared to the barely discussed opposition, from artists and public alike, to some of those films.

The synoptic method might be justified on the grounds that it does allow Mr. Hull to introduce us to some little-known films, as well as supplying some valuable and hitherto barely documented background material. He is informative on the structure of the industry, on Karl Ritter's militarist propaganda (*Über Alles in der Welt* and the ludicrous *Stukas*, in which the hero's jaded morale is miraculously boosted by listening to Wagner), on the retrospectively sinister background to Wolfgang Liebeneiner's *Ich klage an!*,

which lengthily debated the pros and cons of euthanasia, and on the changes made in Harlan's *Der grosse König* after the invasion of Russia. He makes the interesting point (but then fails to develop it) that many of the films directed at potential recruits for the Nazi youth brigades featured recalcitrant heroes whose American counterparts would be juvenile delinquents. And he usefully spotlights some of the unjustly neglected films of Harlan, Herbert Selpin, Käutner (though 'heir to Ophuls' he is not) and Gustav Ucicky. It would have been interesting to have more on these films, if only because they confirm that the *Gleichschaltung* process did not entirely obliterate individual talent.

Instead, Mr. Hull spends space on potted biographies of actors and directors, Goebbels' love life, the Pola Negri affair, a gossip letter about the alleged racial impurities of the first president of the *Filmkammer*. And there are tedious pages on the plots of numerous deservedly forgotten films on which his critical comments are confined to vague assessments of acting and photography. Where he does venture comment, it is sometimes misleading. To say, for instance, that Selpin's *Die Reiter von Deutsch-Ostafrika* (1934) is 'violently anti-British' is to misunderstand the film's political and historical context: the British are indeed crudely caricatured, but so were Germans in British films of this period, when politically the Germans had no more reason to be anti-British than they were in the frequently misunderstood *Morgenrot* (1932). Both these films, and a good many more, were more anti-war than anti-British.

For his sources Mr. Hull relies heavily on Dr. Bauer's catalogue, contemporary reports from the *New York Times*, and Joseph Wulf's documentation *Theater und Film im Dritten Reich*, but his indiscriminate use of these and other sources is characteristic of the general lack of direction in the book. His own style (not helped by frequent misspellings and typographical errors) is often almost as turgid as his literal translations of original documents, which make the admittedly bombastic official German of the time virtually unreadable. The book is the work of nine years' research. It is a pity that the fruits of that research are so often squandered on such unhelpful bits of information as the price of breakfast at the State Film Academy.

DAVID WILSON

MAURITZ STILLER OCH HANS FILMER 1912-1916 [Mauritz Stiller and his Films 1912-1916], by Gösta Werner. Illustrated. (P. A. Norstedt, Stockholm, 98 Sw. Cr.)

THE NEW GENERATION of film historians is growing steadily. To Jacques Deslandes and Gordon Hendricks must now be added Gösta Werner, who has the added distinction of himself being a very talented film-maker; and just as the two former self-consciously react in their scholarship against the earlier generation of pioneer synthesist historians represented by Georges Sadoul and Terry Ramsaye respectively, so Gösta Werner takes his national historian, Bengt Idestam-Almqvist, as the butt of his criticism.

But there are other and more noteworthy ways in which this is an important book. In particular, the author has undertaken to clarify, as far as is now possible, the early work of Stiller before he made the films for which he is famous. And that is no easy task, for of the 32 films which can be attributed to him with certainty between 1912 and 1916, only one, *Love and Journalism*, has survived in full, together with fragments from three others. Gösta Werner's task has been, therefore, two-fold. He has related Stiller's life, first in the theatre (in Finland and then in Sweden) and subsequently in the cinema (with Svenska Bio, the forerunner of Svensk Filmindustri) using only unimpeachable primary sources. But this is only the *hors d'oeuvre*. For the main course he has reconstructed the plots of the first 32 films, again using only completely trustworthy material. Consequently, we now have for the first time fairly full and reliable synopses of all Stiller's early work, based on stills and lists of sub-titles. Other major source material used includes the archives of Svensk Filmindustri and the records of the State Film Censorship Board.

The first pages of the book, which relate Stiller's early history, are the easiest reading for they alone are narrative. The centre section (pp. 73-327) contains the detailed critical filmography, well illustrated with stills, with reconstructed synopses, credits, details of surviving source material (including prints), and discussion of such matters as script. A final section contains some very detailed tables.

The research for this book has been prodigious, and it is mainly owing to Svensk Filmindustri, which was celebrating its 50th anniversary, and the Holger and Thyra Lauritzen Foundation that it could be published in the lavishly uncompromising form in which it appears. Certainly no one can now write about Stiller or the early Swedish cinema without using this book as a prime source of his

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information. Its usefulness is made a little greater by containing an eight page summary in English. Unfortunately, the summary gives access only to the narrative portions and the tables. It is to be hoped that Svensk Filmindustri or F.I.A.F. will subsidise an English translation of the reconstructed synopses in the hope that prints of at least some of the 31 missing films may be lying as yet unidentified in an archive or collection somewhere. For instance, *Balettpriam-donnan* was distributed in at least 56 copies abroad, of which at least 15 came to Britain; and similar figures are given for many of the other films. As the author has researched almost entirely in Nordic material (naturally enough), there is a possibility that foreign research may yet be able to supplement the information so magnificently gathered by him. It would also be rather nice if he would go on to do the same for early Sjöström.

NEVILLE HUNNINGS

CORRESPONDENCE

Topaz Concluded

The Editor, SIGHT AND SOUND

SIR,—I was intrigued by your researches into the ending of Hitchcock's *Topaz*. It appears that there must be at least three endings, because that seen on the release print in Toronto corresponded to none of those described in SIGHT AND SOUND. After the spy enters his house there is a shot and the frame freezes. Cut to a Paris boulevard where we see the headline on a newspaper being read by someone sitting on a bench. The headline reads something like 'Missile Crisis Over'. The newspaper is discarded on to the pavement and its reader shuffles off. People are going about their business, yesterday's headlines are already on the rubbish heap of history. Swell up of the martial music which was played behind the titles. Do readers know of any other versions of the ending?

Yours faithfully,

York University, Toronto.

I. C. JARVIE

To clarify a point which may have confused other readers: both release versions end with the street scene described by Professor Jarvie. In one version this follows the implied suicide of the spy, Granville; in the other, it follows the scene of the encounter at the airport.

Bergman with Cuts

SIR,—I have now seen three different versions of Bergman's outstanding film *The Silence*: the apparently complete version, in Germany, in 1963; the pre-censored British version, which had some substantial cuts; and recently, at the National Film Theatre, a version with still more cuts. This last one was part of the extensive Bergman series, and it's a pity that the NFT were fobbed off with this very incomplete copy. Oddly enough, the Programme Officer told me he thought it was complete. So, I suppose, did most of the audience, and many people must have wondered what all the controversy could have been about when the film first appeared.

Yours faithfully,

Sevenoaks, Kent.

DAVID COX

Oxford Animation Festival

SIR,—SIGHT AND SOUND readers may be interested to know that the Oxford Animation Festival takes place on November 6th to 8th 1970 at the Moulin Rouge Cinema, Oxford. Seventy leading animators have been asked to select their six favourite films. Based on their replies, the festival programme will provide a comprehensive picture of world animation, 1909-1970. Among films new to Britain will be the American musical *Shinbone Alley* and Jan Lenica's feature *Adam 2*.

Information and tickets from 22 Lloyd Square, London, W.C.1. or from 9a Paradise Street, Oxford.

London, W.C.1.

Yours faithfully,

PETER SHELTON

It's All True

In the Winter issue of SIGHT AND SOUND, Charles Higham will be answering fully the letter by Richard Wilson in this issue (pages 188-193) about the history of IT'S ALL TRUE.

Towards a Sociology of the Cinema

A Comparative Essay on the Structure and Functioning of a Major Entertainment Industry

I. C. JARVIE *Professor of Philosophy, York University, Toronto.* Dr. Jarvie provides a framework for the comparative sociological analysis of the cinema. He examines various central problems, including the structure and organization of the making of films, of what the audience experiences and of the evaluative process. The book concludes with an extensive annotated bibliography of material on the sociology and psychology of the cinema.

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FESTIVALS 70: VENICE

continued from page 215

of people stand composing letters to those absent in alien lands; the other a breathless moment when the hero, passing briefly through Paris on his way home, rushes out of the station to register one all-embracing look at the promised land to treasure on his return to the Hungary he cannot leave. *A Love Film* is perhaps a trifle too long and repetitive: otherwise I'd say it was a masterpiece.

Two more films from RAI, the enterprising Italian TV service responsible for *The Spider's Strategy*. I didn't much care for Fellini's *I Clowns*, a jocular attempt to explain his obsession with the circus, concocted with some historical chit-chat, some film-within-the-film pretensions, and the usual flights of bloated fantasy. Rossellini's *Socrates*, though, is in its minor key way almost as striking as *La Prise de Pouvoir par Louis XIV*. The opening is hideous, with half-hearted Spartan extras attacking a segment of wobbly wall and knocking it down to reveal painted backdrops of the Acropolis, followed by some stilted historical situation-setting. But as soon as Socrates appears—a marvellously wry, amused performance by Jean Sylvere—the film collects itself into a compelling explanation of the man, his philosophy, and why his modest logic so got under his contemporaries' skins. Minimal cinema, perhaps, but a film of exquisite insight.

Two major disappointments, too, in Francesco Rosi's *Uomini Contro* and Glauber Rocha's multi-lingually but ungrammatically titled *Der Leone Have Sept Cabecas*. Although *Uomini Contro* may be tolerably daring in an Italian context as a denunciation of war, it is difficult to see why Rosi should have wanted to make it. Like *Paths of Glory*, it concentrates on one unit condemned to suicidal attacks on a hilltop stronghold in the First World War, and coolly records the futility and waste as the generals command, the men obey, and mutiny brews. Rosi's direction is impeccable, and Pasqualino De Santis' chillingly blue-toned photography is

superb, but the film just doesn't hold the attention after Kubrick's much more complex dissection of the mechanics of power. The Rocha, set in Africa and offering a clarion call to revolution, has none of the hieratic splendour of *Antonio das Mortes*. It could, in fact, be called a shambles, with false prophets, CIA agents, missionaries, revolutionaries, down-trodden blacks, and a nude lady called the Golden Beast of Violence all swilling round in an apocalyptic jumble.

Lastly, there were two appealing oddities. Poland contributed *Lokis*, adapted from the Mérimée story and directed by Janusz Majewski as something of a Hammer Horror about a young man whose mother was carried off by a bear on her wedding day, and who broods endlessly about the possibility that he is a were-bear until he finally cuts his bride's throat on her wedding night and disappears into the forest. Also vaguely Hammerish, the Egyptian *Night of Counting the Years* is a moody, moonlit piece based on the true story of the discovery in 1881 of a priceless cache of forty royal mummies. Somehow, out of the clash between villagers who rob the sarcophagi and museum curators who remove them in the interests of history, while the young hero stands between them haunted by mysterious echoes of Egypt's buried past, director Shadi Abdelsalam creates a strange, mystical crisis of national identity. At the moment Abdelsalam's chiaroscuro images are a little too carefully composed, his pace a shade too measured, but this is only his first film and it unquestionably reveals a film-maker.

TOM MILNE

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

MARGARET HINXMAN has been a film journalist and reviewer for twenty years on *Time and Tide*, *Picturegoer*, *The Daily* (now *Today's Cinema*), *Queen* and other publications; for the past three years has been film critic on the *Sunday Telegraph*. . . . TERENCE KELLY is a freelance journalist and former BBC TV News script-writer and radio producer. He was principal author of the Bow Group study *A Competitive Cinema*. . . . RICHARD KOSZARSKI has completed work for his M.A. in Cinema Studies at New York University and is writing a book on von Stroheim's films. . . . JOSEPH MCBRIDE is a newspaper reporter working for the *Wisconsin State Journal* and has recently completed a book about Orson Welles. . . . PHILIP STRICK is head of Film Distribution at the British Institute, and is working on a book about Roger Corman. . . . JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR is film critic of *The Times*. Has written numerous books including *Anger and After*, *Cinema Eye*, *Cinema Ear*, *The Art Nouveau Book in Britain*.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

UNITED ARTISTS for *A Passion*, *Fellini Satyricon*, *Leo the Last*, *Von Richthofen and Brown*, *Bloody Sunday*, *La Sirène du Mississippi*, photograph of John Boorman.
PARAMOUNT PICTURES for *Murphy's War*, *Catch 22*.
WARNER BROS. for *The Rise and Rise of Michael Rimmer*, *There Was a Crooked Man*, *Death in Venice*, photograph of Kevin Billington.
20th CENTURY-FOX for *The Kremlin Letter*, *Me and My Girl*, *Judge Priest*, *The Power and the Glory*.
20th CENTURY-FOX/CINEMA CENTER FILMS for *Little Big Man*.
COLUMBIA PICTURES for photograph of Dick Clement.
MGM-EMI for *The Go-Between*.
RANK DISTRIBUTORS for photograph of Peter Hall.
BRITISH LION for photograph of James Clark.
LONDON SCREENPLAYS for *Perfect Friday*.
CONTEMPORARY FILMS for *A Married Couple*.
AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL PICTURES for *Bloody Mama*, *Gas-s-s*.
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FILM GUIDE

Films of special interest to SIGHT AND SOUND readers are denoted by one, two, three or four stars.

***BORSALINO (Paramount)** Belmondo and Delon as smalltime racketeers who rise to the top in the pre-war Marseilles underworld. France's answer to *Bonnie and Clyde*, carried along quite spiritedly by the tailored star performances and interior decoration rather than by direction or script. (Michel Bouquet; director, Jacques Deray. Eastman Colour.)

***BOYS IN THE BAND, THE (Cinema Center/Fox)** Somewhat over-wrought film from Mart Crowley's play about a New York homosexual party and the confessional orgies triggered off by the presence of a 'straight' outsider. Abrasive, waspish dialogue, but the sweating, tear-stained close-ups get a bit out of hand. (Kenneth Nelson, Leonard Frey; director, William Friedkin. DeLuxe Colour.)

BUTTERCUP CHAIN, THE (Columbia) Musical chairs among a *ménage à quatre* as they glide across pretty scenery from Sweden to Spain. Occasionally intriguing in its oblique shuffling of relationships, but a too brightly enamelled surface obscures characters and motives. (Hywel Bennett, Leigh Taylor-Young, Jane Asher; director, Robert Ellis Miller. Technicolor, Panavision.)

CHISUM (Warner) Standard saga of Billy the Kid, except that John Wayne—first and last seen brooding monumentally from a hilltop—breathes heavily on the sidelines as an ageing cattle baron sighing for the good old days. (Forrest Tucker, Christopher George, Ben Johnson; director, Andrew McLaglen. Technicolor, Panavision.)

CROMWELL (Columbia) Fair child's history film, though too often spotted with inaccuracies, taking Richard Harris' hoarse, solemn Cromwell through the Civil War and into a de Gaullish retirement from which he emerges as Lord Protector. Alec Guinness' testily vacillating Charles loses his head with predictable grace. (Robert Morley, Dorothy Tutin; director, Ken Hughes. Technicolor, Panavision.)

****DOWNHILL RACER (Paramount)** Superior sports story, about a young skier on the American Olympic team who wins gold. Alert direction by a newcomer, Michael Ritchie, and a script by James Salter which slaloms cunningly and engagingly through the clichés. (Robert Redford, Gene Hackman, Camilla Sparv. Technicolor.) Reviewed.

EL CONDOR (Carthay Center) Absolutely routine Western—Italian-style but American with English direction—offering little but nudity and violence as two amiable bad men and Apache friends besiege a Mexican fort in search of gold that isn't there. (Jim Brown, Lee Van Cleef, Patrick O'Neal; director, John Guillermin. Technicolor.)

EXPLOSION (Rank) American draft-dodger takes up with hippy on trek through Canada. Confused, cliché-bound effort at saying something significant about responsibility and generational conflict; unlike *Prologue*, the medium not equal to the message. (Don Stroud, Gordon Thomson; director, Jules Bricken. Technicolor.)

****FELLINI SATYRICON (United Artists)** What might have been a sex-spectacular romp becomes a nightmarish exploration of a Roman underworld not so very different from that of *La Dolce Vita*, and equally a projection of Fellini's own imagination. Fantastic colour effects; in every sense stunning. (Martin Potter, Hiram Keller, Alain Cuny. DeLuxe Colour, Panavision.) Reviewed.

*****FEMME DOUCE, UNE (Academy/Connoisseur)** The pin-point precision of Dostoevsky's enigmatic character sketch somehow eludes Bresson, whose heroine tends to remain a cross rather than a gentle soul. Hypnotic, notwithstanding. (Dominique Sanda, Guy Frangin. Eastman Colour.)

***FRAGMENT OF FEAR (Columbia)** Young reformed drug addict runs into eccentric, wildly ramifying conspiracy while investigating the death of Aunt Flora Robson. Some effectively uneasy encounters, even if the whole thing only builds to one of those madman's trick endings. (David Hemmings, Gayle Hunnicutt; director, Richard Sarafian. Technicolor.)

GAMES, THE (Fox) Cliché-bound attempt, set against the Rome Olympics, to encapsulate the less publicised manoeuvrings of big time international athletics. Flashily directed by Michael Winner, though the marathon finale is well staged despite an unconvincing quartet of runners. (Michael Crawford, Stanley Baker, Charles Aznavour. DeLuxe Colour, Panavision.)

***GETTING STRAIGHT (Columbia)** Like *The Graduate*, Richard Rush's romantic comedy of student unrest combines hard-hitting dialogue with a soft moral centre. Its exploitation of fashionable themes, from permissive sex to police brutality, is largely redeemed by Elliott Gould's splendid performance as a vociferous drop-out trying hard to drop back in. (Candice Bergen, Robert F. Lyons. Eastman Colour.) Reviewed.

GOODBYE GEMINI (C.I.R.O.) Risibly misconceived mélange of incest, homosexual blackmail and sordid murder amid the exotic trappings of a swinging London not even *Time* magazine could have invented. An embarrassed Michael Redgrave stumbles through it all as a most unlikely progressive MP. (Judy Geeson, Martin Potter; director, Alan Gibson. Eastman Colour.)

****GRAZIE, ZIA (Avco Embassy)** First film by Salvatore Samperi: much influenced by Bellocchio (among others) but revealing real flair in a bizarre tale about a neurotic youth who shams paralysis and amuses himself from a wheelchair by drawing his pretty doctor-aunt into a vortex of sexual-necrological games. (Lou Castel, Lisa Gastoni, Gabriele Ferzetti.)

HELLO-GOODBYE (Fox) Romantic comedy which maladroitly combines old-fashioned Hollywood discretion with nods to contemporary mores in the shape of a fashionably enigmatic French woman eluding the attentions of a besotted English car fiend. Disappointingly clumsy comeback for Jean Negulesco. (Michael Crawford, Geneviève Gilles, Curd Jurgens. DeLuxe Colour.)

HETEROSEXUAL (Antony Balch) Girl leaves convent to get embroiled in lesbianism, drug nightmares and a crash course in updated de Sade under the guidance of an elderly disciple. Tawdry, humourless sex drama. (Maria Pia Conti, Lea Nanni; director, Warren Kiefer. Eastman Colour.)

HOFFMAN (Warner-Pathe) Peter Sellers as a neurotic bachelor who blackmails a girl from the typing pool into spending a week with him. True love finally rears its head. Some brightish, nervous dialogue is spread pretty thinly over this stretched version of a more claustrophobic TV play. (Sinead Cusack; director, Alvin Rakoff. Technicolor.)

MAN CALLED HORSE, A (Cinema Center) Richard Harris as an improbable English lordling who is captured by the Sioux and after painful initiation rites emerges as full-blown tribal chief. Said to be accurate down to the last wigwag, but still a rather arduous mixture of dour incident and stray hints of self-parody. (Judith Anderson, Jean Gascon; director, Elliot Silverstein. Technicolor, Panavision.)

MAN CALLED SLEDGE, A (Columbia) Briskly violent European Western about gold fever, with characterless playing and direction which, curiously, mixes elements of *Sierra Madre* and *Riot in Cell Block 11*. Unconvincing on most levels. (James Garner, Dennis Weaver, John Marley; director, Vic Morrow. Technicolor, Techniscope.)

MAN WHO HAUNTED HIMSELF, THE (Warner-Pathe) Depressed psychological thriller which sets the clock back twenty years in its stolid treatment of a story about a business executive plagued by his *alter ego*. An inauspicious start to Bryan Forbes' new production programme. (Roger Moore, Hildegard Neil; director, Basil Dearden. Technicolor.)

****MARRIED COUPLE, A (Contemporary)** A compendium of incidents in the daily existence of a Canadian advertising executive and his family, constructed by Allan King with every evidence of being genuine but with an inevitable sense of contrivance lurking not too far away. As compelling a portrait of the storms and summers of the married state as one could encounter on the screen or anywhere else. (Billy Edwards, Antoinette Edwards, Bogart Edwards. Technicolor.) Reviewed.

***OUT-OF-TOWNERS, THE (Paramount)** Neil Simon scripted comedy of a pair of mid-Westerners exposed to every hazard, from blizzard to

garbage strike to mugging, that New York can offer. Intermittently hilarious, the single joke wears a bit thin, and Jack Lemmon and Sandy Dennis maintain an unvarying hysterical pitch as the luckless visitors. (Director, Arthur Hiller. Movielab.)

******PASSION, A (United Artists)** Bergman's second film in colour and probably his most uncompromising exploration of existential neuroses. Driven to despair and violence in their quest for emotions they no longer feel, four irredeemably isolated people act out their emptiness on Faro island. (Max von Sydow, Liv Ullmann. Eastman Colour.) Reviewed.

PERFECT FRIDAY (London Screenplays) Cunningly plotted and executed perfect robbery provides the main interest in a would-be swinging comedy fatally short on charm. Stanley Baker's glum bank official abetted by David Warner and Ursula Andress as an improbable peer and his even more improbable wife. (Director, Peter Hall. In colour.)

***PUTNEY SWOPE (Contemporary)** Promise unfulfilled in what starts brightly as a Negro take-over of a Madison Avenue advertising agency. The rest is like an overlong satire show, with just a few good jokes in among too many undisciplined swipes at ad mass, Black Power, et al. (Arnold Johnson, Laura Green; director, Robert Downey. Part Eastman Colour.)

***REIVERS, THE (Warner-Pathe)** Glowingly romantic adaptation of Faulkner's novel about the careless rhapsody of youth in turn-of-the-century Mississippi. Likeable performance from Steve McQueen, but a general anxiety to please rather spoils the carefully spiced flavour of the original. (Mitch Vogel, Sharon Farrell; director, Mark Rydell. Technicolor, Panavision.)

SICILIAN CLAN, THE (Fox) Professional but somewhat low-pressure thriller about an Italian gang in Paris, masterminded by a grandfatherly Jean Gabin, who stage elaborate plane hijack. Dubbed dialogue; enough devious plotting to keep interest simmering. (Alain Delon, Lino Ventura; director, Henri Verneuil. DeLuxe Colour, Panavision.)

SUNFLOWER (Avco Embassy) De Sica continues to abandon social realism for sentimental fantasy in this wistful soap opera spectacular in which Sophia Loren wanders disconsolately round the USSR in search of a long-lost husband. Authentic locations merely emphasise the artificiality of the rest. (Marcello Mastroianni. Technicolor.)

***THEY SHOOT HORSES, DON'T THEY? (C.I.R.O.)** Sydney Pollack wrings every ounce of allegory from this story of a mid-Depression marathon dance contest. Abrasive performances from Gig Young as a cynical master of ceremonies and Jane Fonda as a desperate two-time loser, but the characters are too neatly stereotyped to gain power as individuals. (Michael Sarrazin, Susannah York. DeLuxe Colour, Panavision.)

***TOO LATE THE HERO (C.I.R.O.)** *The Dirty Dozen* revisited, with Michael Caine and Cliff Robertson bantering national insults as an army patrol performs reluctant World War II heroics against the Japanese. A witty script (first half) and nice performances (Denholm Elliott, Ian Bannen) keep things going. (Harry Andrews, Ronald Fraser; director, Robert Aldrich. Metrocolor, 70 mm.)

TOOMORROW (Rank) Harry Saltzman makes a bid for the teenage market with a corny blend of pop and science fiction. Extravagant sets and a fresh-faced, embarrassingly ingratiating pop group light years removed from the real thing. (Olivia Newton-John, Benny Thomas, Roy Dotrice; director, Val Guest. Technicolor, Panavision.)

****VIRGIN AND THE GYPSY, THE (London Screenplays)** Christopher Miles reveals a gift for atmospheric landscape and domestic detail in this sensitive and unsensational adaptation of Lawrence's novella. A wistful, restrained performance from Joanna Shimkus as the eponymous virgin and an earnestly madcap adulteress from Honor Blackman. (Franco Nero. In colour.) Reviewed.

WALK IN THE SPRING RAIN, A (Columbia) Ingrid Bergman goes back to nature with Anthony Quinn, a sort of Zorba from the Tennessee mountains, but renounces him eventually for the duties of a suburban grandmother. Miss Bergman retains her dignity in the most embarrassing situations. (Fritz Weaver, Katherine Crawford; director, Guy Green. Technicolor, Panavision.)

****WOODSTOCK (Warner-Pathe)** Mike Wadleigh's exhilarating split-screen account of the celebrated pop music festival and the quarter of a million crowd who attended it. Not just a filmed concert, but a lively and sympathetic exploration of America's dropped out sub-culture. (Richie Havens, The Who, Jimi Hendrix. Technicolor.)



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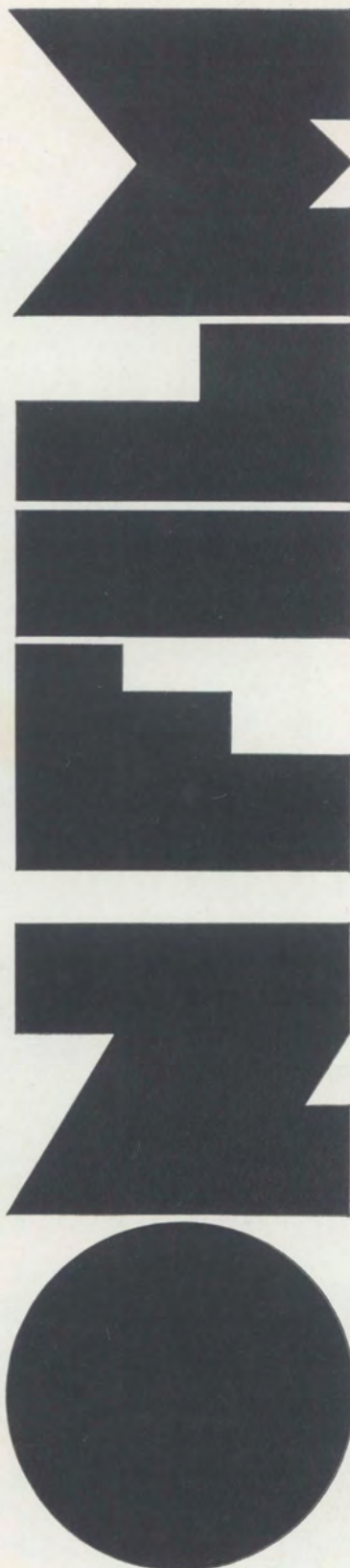
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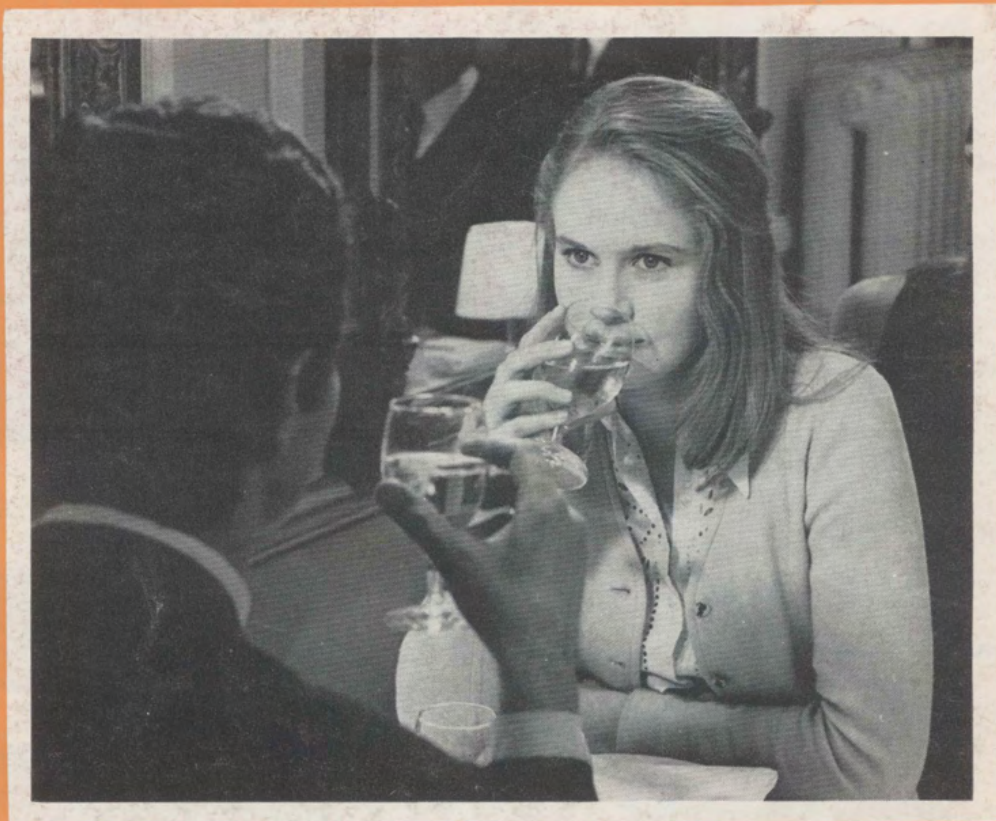
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